HONESTY

WILLIAM HEALY

HILDHOOD AND YOUTH SERIES

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HONESTY

A Study of the Causes and Treatment of Dishonesty Among Children

By

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Childhood and Youth Series

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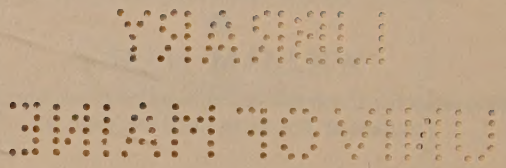

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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

The author of this volume has had exceptional opportunities to investigate the subjects discussed herein. As Director of the Juvenile Psychopathic Institute in Chicago for a number of years, he has dealt with many young people charged with dishonesty and brought before him for diagnosis and recommendations. In his study of these cases, he has employed methods of examination which have enabled him to detect causes of misconduct that could not have been revealed by superficial observation, and especially not by the usual method of mere theorizing. Doctor Healy's position requires that he should serve as adviser to the Judge of the Juvenile Court of Chicago, which responsibility makes it imperative that he should attempt to discover and evaluate accurately all the circumstances and backgrounds of the cases of delinquency brought before him. In the same careful way he outlines methods of treatment which will be adapted to each individual offender. The present volume is the outgrowth of this first-hand experience in dealing with the causes and the cures of stealing.

The reader of *Honesty* will observe in the first place that, contrary to the popular view, the factors which may lead a child to take what does not belong to him are often very subtle and complex. Unless this fact is appreciated, it will be impossible to protect children from developing the habit of stealing, or to cure them

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when they have entered on a criminal career. Doctor Healy discusses these complex matters in non-technical terms which the layman, whether parent or teacher or social worker, can easily understand. He has adopted a method of presentation which will be of interest and service to the practical worker with children. He describes typical cases of misconduct and its treatment as illustrated by the concrete examples of delinquents who have passed through his hands, and whose traits he gives in sufficient detail so that they can be understood by readers and used to classify and explain cases with which they may have to deal.

The author has succeeded admirably in presenting scientific knowledge so that it can be utilized by those who are responsible for the care and culture of the young. The delinquency which is discussed in this volume gives parents and teachers a great deal of trouble, and will prove a serious handicap in later life to any child who becomes settled in it. This book in the hands of those who train the young should prove of great service in guarding against the first steps of dishonesty or in helping the child to retrace steps already taken on the wrong path.

Madison, Wisconsin. M. V. O'Shea.

PREFACE

Our discussion of honesty and dishonesty in children is particularly addressed to parents and teachers. The field has been wisely delimited by the general editor, and in following his suggestion we shall neither deal with specifically criminal behavior and the material of law courts, nor shall we undertake to outline the subject for those whose professional duty brings constant contact with delinquents. In this volume, rather, we are addressing people who meet the concrete fact of a certain form of misbehavior, namely dishonesty, incidentally to the general affairs of life.

While we are confining ourselves to delinquency as known in the home or school, let none suppose that these early forms of misconduct have no connection with criminalism. On the contrary, a most significant fact on which I am always insisting is that when one traces back the careers of criminals they are practically always found to start in the delinquencies of childhood. Treatment begun in this period when the individual is flexible and habits of mind and character are not yet set—the value of which we wish ever to emphasize—is of vast importance in the light of the possible development of a delinquent career.

The point of departure for us throughout, as the general editor at first stated, is properly the specific form of misconduct and what can be done about it. The teacher or parent is confronted by the fact of

stealing, truancy, lying or what not; their first and last considerations are those of therapy and prevention. Our main aim is to show in simple and non-technical phraseology what there may be in the background of inner mental life or outward experience that has to be met in order that the individual problem may be dealt with successfully.

Our handling of delinquencies in categories, such as the subject of this present work indicates, does not mean that we in the least agree to anything like the old ideas concerning treatment, expressed particularly in laws that provide for specific offenses being met by specific punishments, to say nothing of the immaturely considered legal refinements of this, when there is even discrimination between petty and grand offenses upon a basis of material values. We insist that our researches clearly show that given types of inner or outer causation may lead to any one of several delinquencies, and that the first requisite of good treatment is to proceed from the misconduct back to the underlying cause. It is of the greatest moment for the protection of society as well as for the welfare of the misdoer that there should be accurate understanding of the real situation involved.

Winnetka, Illinois. WILLIAM HEALY.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

ADVANCE in methods of attacking the problems of delinquency marks the present day. There is no more reason for supposing that we can not make great progress along this line of human endeavor than for thinking that any social or scientific effort is limited by the achievements of the past. The accretions to knowledge of the most practical sort made through recent application of thorough methods in this field warrant us in looking steadfastly forward to great improvement in the understanding and treatment of misconduct in children.

Some General Points of View.—Our aim in this work does not include criticism of the failures of the past, except as criticism may be based on accurately gathered data about the nature and needs of individual types of children and of causes of misconduct. Above all things, one need not deal

here with generalities and theories; they are the weakness of formal systems of ethics and criminal science. But there are several general situations or points of view related to the problems of juvenile delinquency which may well be matters of earnest consideration by parents and teachers, who should be the first to observe the signs of the growth of delinquent tendencies.

Adults Fail to Appreciate Vital Facts of Childhood.—In the first place, it is quite obvious to the careful student of juvenile misconduct that the attitude of parents and other adults involved has its peculiarities and irrationalities. It seems that older people have grown too far beyond their memories of the world of childhood, with its special limitations and view-points, to appreciate the motivations and weaknesses of that period. The investigator of what really happens, especially in the mental life of the child, comes on a whole host of phenomena which, as guiding forces of juvenile misconduct, are neither known to the guardians of the particular child nor to other observers. There is an astonishing lack of any attempt to get down to the bed-level of causation and analyze out the essential facts as they really exist, so important for treatment. We are willing to affirm that very rarely indeed does one find anything like adequate recognition of the real world of the child, wherein always grow the beginnings of character, likewise the beginnings of careers, good or bad.

Valuable to Get Appreciation of Mental Mechanisms.—To get appreciation of these fundamental motives and forces, which mean so much for the conduct of life, I have often thought that it would be worth the while of any intelligent person to consider a single individual, perhaps himself, and gather together all the possible items of early mental life, and to refer them to their sources, and to note their finished product in developed character. Perhaps this procedure would be too difficult without instruction in the art of such character analysis. Perhaps, too, as we suggested above, the older person can not remember early formative conditions. But at least it requires no technical or special knowledge to perceive the general fact that in the mental life of any ordinary child there are ideas and emotions and mechanisms that are usually not even regarded as existent.

Essential to Understand Complexity of Causes of Misconduct.—We warn that it is dangerous to seize on any one item discovered by analysis, and feel it alone was responsible for misconduct; it may always be found that causative factors are not single. The canons of intellectual honesty demand that all the main possible sources of difficulty should be investigated; even though trouble in one direction is ascertained, this is no sign that elsewhere everything is right. In our own treatment of special types of individuals and causes in the following pages, we never mean to indicate that

one cause alone bears on the production of delinquency: if impelling mental imagery is involved, so is paucity of healthy mental interests and unfortunate early experiences; if mental incapacity is at fault, so is environmental opportunity, and defective parental guardianship. It should hardly be necessary to say that this complexity of causation is important in considering treatment; while a satisfactory outcome may seem thereby to be rendered more difficult, in reality, through some one feature of the case, a promising avenue of approach may be opened up which otherwise would remain undiscovered.

Superficial Observation Inadequate.—Really intensive study of one or more difficult cases of stealing by children can not fail to bring fair-minded acknowledgment from all of us that year-long observation of children by ordinary methods, in families or in school groups, may leave the observer with small conception of what often is dynamic in the youthful mind. What we may actually find there, impelling to action, demonstrates the truth of the contentions of the modern masters of psychological analysis, who insist that there are many important mental activities and items of mental content of which the onlooker, and even the subject himself, knows little or nothing. The existence of these underlying forces challenges consideration, while it suggests great possibilities in the

way of better preventions and treatments that may come through better understandings.

Practicability of Deeper Studies.—Any careful student of large experience with misdoers would call attention to the great variety and differences in causes found through the scientific investigation of cases. One does not expect from a parent or guardian a detailed knowledge of these manifold conditions, but one may fairly ask for a greater appreciation of the fact that superficial observation seldom tells the story, and that there is urgent practical need for digging into the foundations of conduct. One feels justified in insisting that many of the beginnings of delinquency could be averted if only this appreciation existed and an effort was made to follow the lines of common-sense investigation. Indeed, it is to point out the practicability of more thorough attempts at understanding and treatment (always insisting, however, on the frequent necessity for special studies being made of the problem-child) that this volume is written.

The Common Method of Repression Weak.—Quite in line with the above intimations of why failures arise in treatment of children's misconduct is another point: that concerning common methods of meeting misbehavior. "Thou shalt not," is the typical response that delinquency receives in the home, or the school, or the court. Indeed, we might shorten the phrase and assert that the customary

effort to check undesirable behavior is embodied in the single word, "Don't." Thus to attempt to repress the tendency to misconduct by mere admonition (accompanied perhaps by punishment) savors strongly of the old drug therapy for illnesses—the symptoms, fever, etc., were then the objects of attention; the underlying pathology was not even suspected. Even theoretically we might expect failure from similar methods applied to misdoers; practically, our daily experience uncovers clearly the dearth of results from such ill-considered endeavors.

Parental Attitude of Repression.—Parental repressions form the best example of the faulty method. The parent, the one whom we should expect above all to know the ins and outs of the child's causes of misbehavior, often does just as badly as some impersonal agency, for instance, the law. The actual reaction of parents, as we observe it, ranges all the way between the following extremes: On the one hand, the child is merely told not to repeat the offense, and is expected to follow the warning. "I have told him not to do such things," is then the plea if there is further trouble. There is no parental idea of doing anything else about the matter. At the opposite extreme is the case where the parent hales the young offender before the juvenile court, occasionally at the tender age of ten or twelve years (I have seen many such instances), and, stating that nothing can be done with the child, begs

that a reform-school sentence be imposed. The delinquent is said to disgrace the family, to be impossible to control, to be a young criminal, to deserve nothing good. In any of these cases, including those at either extreme of the attitude toward punishment, there is not the slightest thought of causes and the constructive elements of treatment.

Dangerous Unconcern of Parents.—Two other contrasted features of the attitude of guardians, both to be deplored, should be mentioned. There is often met, as teachers well know, an unfortunate tendency on the part of parents to regard their children's delinquencies with lightness and unconcern. Among the many things we have learned in juvenile court work is that this light attitude, in which the young individual is mainly let alone to work out his own destiny, may result in the growth of distinctly criminalistic behavior. This is true whether the parents' attitude arises from selfish and lazy pushing aside of the issue, or whether the indifference is really due to the conviction that children's misconduct is a natural and temporary phase of their life, and that they will work themselves clear of it. ("I was wild when I was a boy and got over it. I guess it's all right; he'll do the same," is an expression we have heard many times.) The grave dangers of this let-alone principle are connoted by the discussion on most pages of this volume—the reader can think them out for himself.

Possible Making Too Much of the Misconduct.—An entirely opposite attitude of parents, encountered more seldom, is distinguished by too great concern and too much worry. Perhaps a single childish thieving expedition may be taken so hard that the advice of public authorities is sought and severe measures of retribution are considered. A woman, whose boy of eleven years had, under crowd influences, broken into some church building and stolen a few things, came with him in utter despair. He was a splendid little fellow who had followed out a gang-inspired idea of adventure. It was hard to persuade the mother that it was a very normal impulse carried too far. She thought his deed must betoken a real spirit of evil active within him. She represented a type of parent whose over-concern, and perhaps harshness, should be combated. Such people forget, perhaps, their own youth or, at least, the childhood of others who have been, through the accident of a momentary impulse or of crowd-suggestion, heavily delinquent and who have turned out to be quite normal morally. Sound treatment does not require such over-concern nor the conception of any evil spirit that rules children.

The Practical Method of this Volume.—Our method of attacking the topic of dishonesty proceeds from these considerations of general reasons for failure of treatment, to the specific facts of causation found by study of many hundreds of

cases. We shall set forth, with much less attempt at formal arrangement than if we were writing a technical treatise, the various types of findings. While thus aiming at a practical presentation of the subject, for parents and teachers especially, the whole field has been outlined. By virtue of this it is to be hoped that the work will serve as a book of direct reference when a case of stealing is encountered by home or school guardians of children. Various issues will, of course, in particular cases have to be gone into much more thoroughly than is detailed here—professional advice will then often have to be sought.

General Social Measures for Prevention of Stealing Omitted.—It should be obvious that it is not our business now to deal with general social measures that are concerned with the prevention of delinquency. But these are of such vital import for every community that we can not forego their mention. Undoubtedly the most socially economical approach to the problem of stealing is through ascertaining in every city and town what the conditions are that peculiarly make for delinquency. No more important social survey can be contemplated. (One can but be delighted to note that expert services are being used recently in this direction.) Then there are the fine efforts of organizations built up along the lines of a juvenile protective association, in which there is attempt to

work back from the delinquency of the child to the social conditions which are implicated and causative. I particularly commend both these types of effort.

Approach to the Definite Problem.—Now, concerning the immediate approach to a case of dishonesty, when such arises: Common-sense viewing of the whole matter of treatment leads to appreciation of the fact that before treatment can be applied it must be known what there is in conditions or in the individual to be treated. Diagnosis comes before therapy. Knowledge of the etiology, or source of the trouble, is the first step. This requires such intimate acquaintance with the child as is only afforded by viewing him in the light of the known general causations for misconduct. Observing the special traits of the young offender, knowledge of which may well lead to the application of special measures for his benefit, the endeavor should be to trace back to their beginnings, which may lie in several directions, the impulses which preceded the stealing.

Mental Process Always in the Immediate Background.—There is no point of greater general value for the student of delinquency to keep firmly fixed than that all conduct, including misconduct, is the direct outcome of mental processes. This should be accepted as axiomatic. In its simplest or physiological terms conduct may be defined as motor response to orders received from cerebral centers. To be sure, not all action that may be

called social behavior is consciously controlled from the brain. There are many cerebral and even mental activities that go on below the level of consciousness, but some sort of mental process directly originates and rules every bit of conduct.

Practical Bearing of the Mental Background.—We are not here concerned with theoretical matters, we simply bring up this important issue because its validity is thoroughly demonstrable by the most practical considerations. It is clearly discernible from our years of experience that the most economical method of procedure in the study of cases of delinquency is first to ask ourselves what kind of mind we have in the given misdoer, and what there is in this particular mind that causes the undesirable behavior-tendencies. Even let it be a case where environmental causative factors are paramount; we can best understand these through considering the mental activities that they have influenced or started going in unfortunate directions. Not only is this method intrinsically important for the scientific understanding of the case, but, also, one soon learns that the quickest way to alter the tendencies is through modifying the most immediate causal agency—and that is found always in the mental processes of the child.

Mental Life Being Involved Does Not Imply Abnormality.—It should be plain, even from the above remarks, that the author does not imply that delinquents are at all necessarily abnormal indi-

viduals, or subject to pathological states of mind. He has hoped throughout not to bear too hard on the aberrant types who so readily do engage in stealing; most childish misconduct does not arise from such a cause. The insistence on the part which mental phenomena play in conduct involves, very largely, discussion of quite normal processes of mind. Even when treating of adolescence and its instabilities, as related to dishonesty, we have not wished to over-emphasize the characteristics of that period as being abnormal and not susceptible to transmutation through self-control and healthful activities. Above all, the standpoint of the theorist who views all misconduct as evidence of individual queerness, is to be avoided.

Suggestion for Practical Use.—That this book may prove most serviceable, apart from the ordinary reading of it for information, we may offer the following suggestion: When brought face to face with an instance of dishonesty in a child—one of the commonest of delinquencies—the way to proceed rationally, that is diagnostically, is through obtaining an answer to all the main problems suggested in the separate chapters. And, we repeat, even if one source of trouble is discovered, there should be further seeking until all the main possible causes of stealing are ruled out. Is the child normal, defective, or peculiar mentally; was the stealing done under the influence of companions; is there some particular mental content urging toward delin-

quency; what, if any, are the weak points in home management or home interests, and so on? The chapter heads and the synopsis as given in the Table of Contents form a schedule by which can be covered all parts of the field of causation involved in the dishonesty of children.

CHAPTER II

AGE OF MORAL DEVELOPMENT

MUCH has been said by certain students of the psychology of childhood concerning the resemblance of the conduct of the young child to characteristics exhibited during primitive stages of the human race. We find no occasion whatever in our practical work for making much of the supposed likeness; at once we can relegate this conception of child behavior to the theoretical field where it belongs. If we must philosophically pass upon the question of morality in young children the words of Sully may be used, "The first thing that strikes one in all such attempts to fix the moral world of the child is that they are judging of things by the wrong standards. The infant, though it has a nature capable of becoming moral or immoral, is not as yet a moral being; and there is a certain impertinence in trying to force it under our categories of good and bad, pure and corrupt."

Age of Moral Awakening.—At what age children acquire the ideas of right and wrong and, as particularly applicable to our present discussion,

develop the distinction of *meum et tuum* is not to be fixed except in the terms of a range of years. The period in individual cases depends on innate mental abilities, on home teachings and discipline, and since so much of youthful mental development, as Royce insists, is due to imitation, the age greatly depends on the social life of the particular household and community. This last point must be well taken into account in consideration of the age factor in the development of moral traits.

Determinants of Beginnings.—What goes on in his immediate entourage is of prime importance for initiating the child's conceptions of property rights. It is not a matter of poverty as compared with affluence—there are many other incidental conditions that make for the result. It is easy to appreciate that if, for instance, there is an unusual community of interests in the household, the individual brought up under these circumstances may readily fail to perceive in the first years of general social intercourse what a stigma pertains to the appropriation of property away from home. Children in some families, including both rich and poor, as a matter of custom are allowed to help themselves to whatever they please in the way of small things at home. We have learned that this extends even to their being privileged to take money from the parental purse. Under such conditions it can not be expected that there should be shown early that respect for property rights that obtains

when there are sharp rules in the home circle about not interfering with the belongings of others.

Inculcating Respect for Property.—In the light of the fact that a considerable amount of dishonesty, especially during the years of childhood, originates simply through the lack of respect for the rights of others, we may be fairly asked how best the early notion of right and wrong in this particular can be inculcated. We unhesitatingly answer that it is to be accomplished, first and foremost, by environmental example, and, if necessary, by well directed discipline. I shall never forget the case of the young man, an arrant thief, who analyzed out with me the beginnings of his own tendencies, and who, after sincere deliberation, could come to no other conclusion than that it all began with his early practise of taking money from his father's pockets. It seemed that his father, a typical "moderate drinker," was accustomed to come home from work too surly to give his wife a proper allowance, and her recourse was to have her little boy of six years get money from the paternal pockets after her husband had gone to sleep. This was the source of the boy's delinquent tendencies—at the age when he should have been building up his notions of property rights and forming the basis of what would later be called honesty he was often engaged in what strongly resembled stealing. His conception of his possibilities in life always included, from that time on, the chances for obtaining money

and its equivalents by unfair means. If in the home life there is proper respect for the needs and possessions of husband, wife, brother and sister, a recognition of their rights, this forms the most adequate of all moral instruction concerning property. That it may be, and often is, necessary to add even to good example the force of sharp discipline in order that the sense of property rights may be awakened at the earliest moment goes without saying. But more often adoption of a reasoning and teaching attitude with the child offers better service to the desired end.

Need of Child for Property.—We have been constantly struck in our practical experience with the fact that decided values appertain to letting even a very young child have things which belong to itself alone. Beautiful as is the spirit of communal interest in the family life, it is entirely inadequate in meeting the desire for possession that is certainly a part of every normal child's mental life. We are not here concerned with the general possibilities of mental development from experience with possessions, but only with the effect on generating the idea of the rights of possession. I would argue that many of the general causes of dishonesty, such as poverty and avarice, have also their representation in the familiar conditions of early life. A child without individual possessions, whether in a poorly or a well supplied family, experiences poverty. He comes inevitably to desire things for his

own, to be jealous of those who have their own possessions, and is prone to think of how he may acquire such treasures. On the other hand, a child whose ideas of life develop in connection with satisfactory and permanent, even though simple, possessions has much that affords soil for the growth of the best conceptions of property morality. In general, it may be said that the home, as well as the society, which permits individual poverty, is largely responsible for the tendency to dishonesty which may develop as an immediate or indirect reaction.

Innate Qualities vs. Experiences Forming Tendencies.—We have every reason to emphasize the innate differences of individuals as explaining character variations, and yet I would be far from alleging that innate differences have more influence than such environmental conditions as we have just mentioned in the formation of character tendencies and so-called moral perceptions. Taking it altogether, we have every proof that environmental and disciplinary conditions influence greatly where innate and even inherited traits seem to stand out predominatingly as determinants of the age at which the young individual is to develop, if ever, the full sense of right and wrong. A case in point is the following: A boy of five was showing tendencies that alarmed his most excellent father and mother greatly. He was stealing from other places besides his own home, and was running away for half a day at a time. He had taken quite

valuable objects under impulses which could not, of course, be well formulated by himself or others, but evidently they expressed a direct desire for acquisition. The question brought up by the parents was whether or not in this boy defects of inheritance were showing, for a certain male in his direct ancestral line had been a criminal. The boy was found mentally normal and with only slight physical defects that could easily be remedied. The highly intelligent parents, though not well off, were capable of planning with us and carrying out a campaign which included setting a high standard of property rights within the household, giving to the youngster a sufficient supply of simple objects to allow him to develop his own world of possessions. Immediate discipline, too, was used to combat the invasion by the boy of the rights of others. In spite of the bad beginning, at the end of four years now there has long been a complete cessation of the youthful delinquency, although we know well that there might have been expected during this particular period a considerable further development of the tendency to misdoing.

Age Periods of Moral Growth.—From consideration of the above several types of facts, we may rest assured that the age of onset of moral apperceptions can not be fixed or even approximated in any such sense as the processes of physical growth or the items of mental development are to be scheduled. Of course, concerning the matter of appre-

ciation of property rights, we can say that at three or four years one can expect but little perception and controlled conduct, and we can also say that at seven to ten years there should be sufficient development of apperceptions to form the basis of good behavior in this respect. But even at this there is ever the possibility of great individual differences. To get at a general conception of moral age levels I have been interested to inquire from a kindergarten teacher of wide experience concerning the amount of stealing that goes on among children of the kindergarten age, in this instance averaging about five and one-half years. Taking a group of one hundred pupils in daily attendance, and coming mostly from two foreign nationalities which supply our courts with a large number of offenders, we learn that a case of theft in or about the schoolroom occurs on an average only about once a week. It must be remembered, too, that here the children come from the homes of poverty where there is neither a good supply of toys, nor much concern with ethical education, and that the kindergarten material would naturally be attractive as a childish possession. If we wanted to go by general figures, which is far from our purpose in this discussion, we might say then that already before six years there is usually to be found development of the idea of property rights adequate for simple social needs. A definite age of unmorality, which Goddard and some others have intimated might exist at about

nine years, or its equivalent mental age in defectives, has not been substantiated by any large observations, and anyhow has no bearing on a possible earlier development of moral apperceptions.

Fact of Youth Alone Insufficient Reason.—The upshot of any consideration of the youthfulness of the delinquent accounting sufficiently for his misdeeds is that we certainly can not fairly blame childish unmorality, the developmental lack of moral perceptions, unless we go back to extremely early years when, as a matter of fact, no one is inclined to designate appropriation of property as stealing. To cite Sully again, we must be particularly careful in these youngest years not wrongly to interpret behavior. As he says, it will not do to say that children are born thieves because they show themselves at first serenely indifferent to property distinctions and are inclined to help themselves to other children's toys, etc. "For some time after birth the child is little more than an incarnation of appetite which knows no restraint and only yields to the undermining force of satiety. The child's entrance into social life through a growing consciousness of the existence of others is marked by much fierce opposition to their wishes."

Treatment by Ages.—If the above be true, attempts at treatment in cases of stealing need not be hindered by the idea that they are useless because of the immaturity of the offender, except in cases of very young children and defectives who are

correspondingly intellectually youthful. In mental defectives, however, as we shall show in our chapter which deals with them, immaturity of certain intellectual abilities does not certainly connote corresponding inability to grasp moral discriminations and to gain some satisfactory measure of social self-control. The treatment of delinquents, particularly on its constructive side, offers variant possibilities according to the age and the mental interest of the individual. What one can do in the way of prevention of stealing at one period of life is entirely different from what is possible at another time. What is actually feasible has to be studied out in the light of the individual's characteristics and the mental content and the environmental circumstances, all of which differ, of course, from time to time in the individual, but which must not be approached from a preconceived standpoint of what interests properly belong to a child of twelve years, for instance. The experiences and native demands of children differ much more than their elders are apt to allow for, and particularly in this important matter, where individual characteristics stand out as nowhere else, there must be a diagnosis from all standpoints of each delinquent child. We feel this so strongly that we are loath to indicate any forms of treatment as belonging specifically to particular age groups.

CHAPTER III

HOME CONDITIONS AND PARENTAL BEHAVIOR

WE HAVE every reason to be convinced that the strongest vantage point for attack on the whole field of delinquency or criminalism is in the home. General statements about this fact and wholesale blaming of parents are, however, of little avail. Careful studies of conditions and personalities must often be enlisted to obtain proper appreciation of how the attack can be begun. Sometimes points obtained only through the diagnoses of specialists are necessary. But it certainly is through the home itself, in our country's type of civilization, that we can hope for the greatest warfare on delinquent tendencies.

The General Problem.—Men of the broadest practical experience with juvenile delinquency, particularly juvenile court judges, have been most emphatic in attributing a great preponderance of the delinquency of children to parental neglect. However, this is a position very easy to take because the guardianship of the child rests on the parents, naturally, and whatever the child does or does not do may be said to be largely the result of good or faulty

guardianship. If the children do well the parents set them in the way of doing well; if they do ill the parents have neglected to keep close enough watch on them, or have been too severe. We ourselves see clearly all sorts of parental incompetencies and neglects. But we are forced to ask, in turn, whence arose the parental inadequacies, and more than anything else we are obliged to concern ourselves with debating what can be done about it. Sometimes family circumstances can be rehabilitated, or changed in radical ways from what they were before, but sometimes there are innate difficulties in the parental mental make-up that are quite unalterable. I am not sure we need concern ourselves much here with this latter type of parents; the only way to reach them is through social action. In the course of this chapter, written largely for parents who are willing to face understandingly the problem of stealing in children, many of the responsible family conditions will be made manifest. These points, too, can be utilized for study and diagnosis of the special case by teachers and social workers, who may have the power of getting family conditions improved, even where there is no initiative within the home circle.

The Only Reasonable Attitude of Parents.— When considering a case of dishonesty on the part of a child the only reasonable and practical attitude for a parent to take is through asking the following question: As guardian and natural director of the

living conditions of this child in what way am I, or have I been, a contributing agent to the delinquency? It is playing a weak part to throw up one's hands in holy horror, insisting that any parental participation in causation of the delinquency is quite beyond the bounds of possibility. The whole problem has many negative as well as positive aspects, and it is the guardians' sins of omission as well as commission which may be involved. As our judges so frequently observe, parents should have maintained themselves in the position of knowing the facts about the development of the delinquent trend of their child. In other cases the trouble has gone on with the direct knowledge of the parents who have proved themselves incompetent or unwilling to alter the situation. Now, we are not at all concerned here with the matter of blame; we merely ask for earnest consideration of the possibilities and responsibilities of parental action. The plainest way for us to put the problem, and for parents to put it to themselves, is in the following statement: The best approach to delinquency is by discovering its causes, and for this one of the most important considerations is understanding the part that home conditions and parental guardianship play in its production.

The Immoral Home.—We need spend little time in discussing the actually immoral home as producing a thieving child. Cause and effect are then so obvious that they hardly need mention. In many

of our cases we have learned that the home of the stealing child contained some older person who was addicted to vicious or even criminal habits. Here was John, for instance, a little boy of twelve, who was already notorious in his neighborhood for stealing. He was an active and bright little fellow. Home control was worse than nil on account of the father's being a man of criminal tendencies, alcoholic and a wife-beater. In this instance we had proof of the fact, for when this boy, about whom we could give a favorable prognosis on account of good native ability, was removed to a good country home he entirely ceased his transgressions. Or we might take the case of another lad, Harry, who was not even eight years old when we first saw him, as a little boy who had been stealing frequently for a year or two. On the mother's side this child came from excessively bad stock; the mother herself was separated from the father and was leading an immoral life. She had been coming to her former husband's good home and begging the boy to break away and to come with her. Such a case is frightful in its possibilities and there are all sorts of variations in this type of family background.

Another boy of eight years, who was a neighborhood pest on account of stealing and other delinquencies, was the victim of home conditions in the following way: The father was a railroad man. He was away from home much, and, moreover, he was of a careless type. The mother suffered from

a chronic ailment and in following a therapeutic error partook largely of an alcoholic medicine, which together with her disease made her absolutely careless about her children. But after her death this boy was brought up from the lowest depths into decent living under the conditions of better environments away from his family. All such cases are obvious in their import. Thieving, immorality and drunkenness in the home are almost bound to result in the delinquency of any child unfortunate enough to live there. School people should be the social workers to perceive these living conditions, and one of the greatest hopes of the future is that through the agency of the schools there shall be adequate recognition of those facts which society should deal with by way of prevention at the earliest possible moment.

Lesser Parental Delinquencies.—More subtle is the effect of smaller delinquencies on the part of parents. These, too, through the force of example, may be directly creative of such unfortunate tendencies as are expressed in the child's stealing. I mean that where parents are careless about their social responsibilities concerning property rights the effect may be the production of a like attitude on the part of the child. Parents who borrow articles or money without repayment, who accept presents they know are not honestly obtained, who do not pay their bills, who are engaged in business which is permeated with graft or bribery, are in a fair way to produce

a lack of respect for the rights of others on the part of their children, which may show itself by stealing. Of course, the young child is not apt to know much about the tricks of business, but it does early know about things received in the family circle which are never paid for. In adolescence, when there is an awakening of apperception of the social order, and enlargement of experiences, it is only natural that there should be greater appreciation of parents' delinquencies, and possible imitation of their type of behavior. No doubt the petty delinquencies of parents sometimes represent a neighborhood spirit—parents themselves may be subject to the influence of social suggestion, as well as their children. We have spoken of this under the head of companionship. We have known of districts where it was shown that practically all, both adults and children, had developed great carelessness about preying upon the neighboring property of some large corporation.

The Shadow of Poverty.—Where the home conditions are overshadowed by dire poverty, the situation is so obvious in its possible relation to stealing, that it needs no discussion. With us in America, poverty as a factor in stealing is not nearly so frequently found as in the older communities of Europe. But, even so, we have enough of it, whether through incompetency or fault of the parents, or through misfortune, sickness and death.

We find the actual facts varying all the way from a case where a child is so unfortunate that it has no home at all, and perhaps no parents, or where drunkenness and criminalism make home conditions just as bad, to some instance where a widow is struggling along and working out every day and forced by circumstances to be neglectful of the better interests of her children.

Conditions in the Wake of Poverty.—In the wake of poverty lie many reasons for the development of a trend toward dishonesty. However, one really finds poverty a factor much less frequently than at first sight one would suppose. The children from a poor home may suffer from any one of the following conditions, which seem to be the main ones correlated with stealing. There may be actual want of food, or need for kinds of food that are not obtainable. The same may be true of clothes. There is apt to be very little to form healthy mental interests in the home surroundings, few toys, few books, few materials for occupations. The result of this is that other allurements are sought, or that city streets prove attractive, and the temptations of these lead to stealing for the sake of satisfying desires. Poverty may prevent normal control and companionship, and even discipline. This is particularly true in the case of half-orphans, or where the household has been deserted by either parent, and the remaining one is solely responsible for mainte-

nance and guardianship. Under such circumstances poverty stands out as one of the most important of family conditions making for delinquency.

Abnormality of Older Persons in the Family.—We would hardly think it necessary to speak of the mental abnormality of an older person in the family as causative of stealing had we not so frequently come on this fact. The effect may be through home irritation, which causes the child early to seek street companions, or it may be that the parent or other person in the home who is feeble-minded, or epileptic, or mildly insane, has the abnormal moral standards that frequently go with such mental troubles, and has introduced the child to a similar view of life. If a delinquent is found in a family where there is a mental defective or aberrational parent, we are prone to draw the conclusion that it is heredity that is at fault, but the truth may be that it is simply home conditions. Mental normality is a prime requisite for the proper training of a child. It is socially dangerous to allow a child to be brought up at all under the guidance of a person mentally abnormal. The sooner society recognizes this fact the better it will be. In hundreds of cases the relation of juvenile dishonesty can be traced to such incompetent up-bringing.

The Case of Michael with a Mentally Defective Mother.—Here is the case of Michael, ten years old, illustrative of the above fact. He steals eatables and small sums whenever he can. He proved nor-

mal by mental tests and there is nothing physically the matter with him. His older brother has already been in the juvenile court. Now Michael has a fairly good father, a laboring man, who makes enough for the family easily to be honest if home affairs are well managed. His wife is a high grade feeble-minded woman, who makes a fair presentation of herself, but who can not economically manage affairs and who is unconcerned about the petty delinquencies of her children. It would be too much to say that she tells them to steal, but their escapades in this direction are matters for merriment and not for discipline with her. Outside of the whole question of inheritance, we have this problem of the home conditions arising under the management of mildly insane, feeble-minded, or otherwise socially incompetent parents.

Lack of Parental Companionship and Guidance.—The lack of parental companionship and guidance is to be noted as one of the main causes of juvenile delinquency in all classes of society. No amount of other explanation of delinquency can minimize this general fact. The responsibilities and possibilities of parental guardianship demand earnest consideration by all who observe individual cases of such social offenses as stealing. Of course it is obvious that practically all stealing by children occurs apart from the oversight of parents, and that if parents had more complete supervision such delinquency would not have been engaged in. In very

many cases we have seen this point come out so strongly that I should heartily recommend every parent and guardian, for the understanding of both cause and treatment, primarily to consider his possible omission of supervision.

Statistics.—Our statement of the importance of this type of fact may be backed up by statistics on what has resulted through the circumstances of broken up families, through death and separation. Going over our juvenile court material of one thousand young repeated offenders, averaging fifteen and one-half years of age, we find that in no less than fifty per cent. of the cases the natural parental relationships were incomplete. Moreover, added to this there were many other instances in which there had been just as little parental supervision as if the parents were dead or living apart. What parental absence or parental neglect of companionship means for the child may be indicated as follows: there will be lack of parental discipline, the opportunity for cultivating bad companionship, failure of recreational opportunities, the possible development of many forms of bad mental content through hearing and seeing improper things and through improper reading. In other words, both the negative and positive phases of a child's mental life and conduct are imperiled without parental care.

Excuses Given for Parental Neglect.—All sorts of excuses will be offered by parents and guardians—these range from the "social duties" of

mothers to the business cares and ostensible needs for fraternizing with other men on the part of the fathers. The validity of such excuses we do not propose to criticize, but, whether we do or not, the results stand out very plainly. Parents who neglect the confidences and companionships and oversights which are necessary to the moral well-being of the child, are themselves very definite contributors to delinquency. In law it might be hard to prove this point except in the rare cases where neglect is a social scandal, but in any true order of things, and as a real moral issue, the fact stands clear.

Home Irritations Productive of Delinquency.—As an indirect cause, even of dishonesty, we have so frequently heard from children the facts about bickerings at home, and later have had them corroborated, that in our enumerated list of factors we find such home irritations frequently appearing. It stands to reason that even with young children, where there is an excessive amount of scolding and nagging, to say nothing of brawling, at home, the reaction may be anti-social. Then the child often seeks secret companionship and through unfortunate alliances may get to stealing. It is said that life on the streets in a city is a cause of stealing, but we, in turn, would ask what induces the child to seek street life. In answer to this we not infrequently run against the fact of home altercations. Although it is hardly our business here to go so far, we might inquire then about the backgrounds of

such parental conduct. Our answer might be poverty, overwork, drinking, even of the moderate variety such as we have mentioned elsewhere, mental and physical disabilities of members of the household, and so on. (Alcoholism of parents is, without doubt, one of the biggest contributing causes for the delinquency of children. Leaving out moderate drinking—itself frequently a cause of home irritation—we found that in the cases of one thousand young delinquents who repeated their offenses, no less than three hundred and eleven had at least one alcoholic parent.) But from whatever cause they may arise, the fact as it applies to the child is that home irritations are prone to produce anti-social conduct. Whenever this is possible, one of the most immediate methods of altering the conduct is to have the fact of home irritation understood by the natural guardians of the child. In some instances other children in the building, or other members of the family, are the cause of the trouble, while sometimes it is special traits of the offender himself that bring about the irritation. Unfortunate reactions between two individuals, even between mother and child, may be the result of qualities in each that grate on the other; then the blame is not all on one side.

Lack of Healthy Home Interests.—Of all the factors of delinquency centering about the home none is so important as the lack of healthy interests which should be fostered there. Discussion of this

subject might lead us into various subtleties that include deep-going psychological considerations. These, however, we can here avoid. It is plain that the bulk of what we have said previously about immorality, poverty, lack of parental companionship and so on could come under the present heading, for many of the results of these outstanding conditions are to be found in the effect on youthful mentality and youthful interests. The same, of course, might be said of the cause for seeking bad companionship; in by far the most cases of the latter the home has afforded nothing that could be the least calculated to offset the attractions of such companionship.

Causes for Lack of Home Interests.—It is important to note that the lack of healthy mental interests at home is not absolutely correlated with poverty and the bad character of a parent. On the contrary, even many well-meaning people who perhaps maintain most orderly homes, either through ignorance or lack of inclination, fail to make any specific effort toward keeping up their home as a center for real development of the children. It would be impossible here even to sketch the many details of home life that should be directed toward character building. Perhaps the main point to make is that the home circle should be the greatest source of information and development of satisfying interests at all stages of the child's life. The idea that in the schoolroom the most important

things of life are learned is quite erroneous. School information is superficial compared to the realities of social behavior and character that are taught first under the parental roof.

Emphasizing once more the bearing that mental emptiness has on the production of delinquent tendencies, one might insist that the child misbehaving himself outside the home has not the right sort of things with which to occupy himself, and therefore he takes up with socially abnormal types of action.

Specific Constructive Home Influences.—It may thus come back to a question of play and of toys and of chances to make things and to have possessions; the absence of interesting competitive games, or chances to develop bodily skill may be blamed; or there may be lack of such direct development of mental interests as is fostered by good conversation and the type of reading that fills the mind with fine imagery. Of the direct development of ethical impulses in the home, whether derived from specific religious or other instruction, we need say nothing, because the part that it should play is altogether obvious. In summary one need only state that in debating how to check a beginning tendency toward stealing, a matter to be carefully weighed is the development of the commanding interests of the individual. And these are to be most satisfactorily formed, whenever possible, through home influences.

CHAPTER IV

COMPANIONSHIP

ONE of the most important considerations in any good approach to the problems presented by a case of dishonesty is whether or not the delinquency was committed in connection with companions. Often the step most necessary for prevention of further misdemeanor will follow on ascertainment of the culpable influence of others. There has been much prominence given in literature to the subject of crowd influences, ranging from the Augustinian Confessions of thieving to the portrayal of New York gangs by Jacob Riis. We would not deny that the same type of cause may be active sometimes when there is companionship in thieving as when stealing is done alone, but often altogether unlike elements are involved and the treatment should be in accordance with these differences.

Social Reactions.—While in this chapter we are concerned merely with quite normal types of children it must be clearly understood from the first that there are some individuals who are abnormally suggestible from a social standpoint, even

though they are not discovered to be defective or erratic in any other mental quality. Then, as we have elsewhere said* in elaborating the facts, there are differences in suggestibility according to age periods, and also marked variations between individuals of the same age. Knowledge of these character peculiarities in the person, is an essential for correct estimation of the possibilities of treatment. A thorough individual diagnosis is only to be made by those who have special knowledge of the related subject, but important indications of general character tendencies can often be obtained from the social reactions of the individual concerned.

Particulars About Companionship.—If in tracing back the tendencies to offense one finds that companions are implicated, then the next step must be to ascertain the particulars of this companionship. Very different considerations may be involved, for instance, when a large gang is responsible than when only two or three companions have entered into the delinquent behavior together. Special points also arise when the association is between an adult or a much older youth and the child in question, or when two sexes are represented. Still more important it is to know what bands together these individuals, on what their fraternity is based. The overt fact of companionship by no means discloses the true inwardness of the situation,

*William Healy. *The Individual Delinquent*, p. 695. Little, Brown & Co., Boston, 1915.

and it is the deeper and more important facts that should always be ascertained in order to place the offender on the road to change his ways. The significance of these points will be made clear through review of typical cases.

Gangs in General.—Any careful observer of human conduct knows that behavior tendencies of crowds vary greatly from conduct exhibited by the separate unit individuals when alone. This is the central idea of studies of crowd psychology. We confess to a feeling that as far as children are concerned there has been some overdoing of the idea that gang activities represent the main natural interests of life during several years, and particularly have we observed that a great deal of delinquency among children occurs quite apart from the influence of any organized crowd. But nevertheless such organizations are common, and through their development of special conditions of mental excitement leading to a peculiar, lawless mob spirit, they do often give rise to delinquency. Making due allowance then for many other kinds and causes of stealing, we should recommend those who care to go further into the inquiry about children's crowds to consult the facts and references given in Stanley Hall's *Adolescence*. But, here again, social generalizations are not what we are after; it is the concrete fact of dishonesty in the special case that is our business, and the possibility of treatment of the individual who has committed the offense.

Types of Gang Thieving.—It is all very well to say that here is an individual who is a member of a gang; he steals, his companions steal, and it is merely because they are members of the gang. This to the psychologist ought not to be sufficiently explanatory; while for the social therapeutist the bare fact leads frequently to no satisfactory recommendation. We find that crowds are held together by widely differing bonds, and one has to look beneath the surface to ascertain their character. Even when the uniting force, for instance, seems to be the typical spirit of adventure of which many writers have made so much, there may be secrets in the background that are anything but what one had supposed. The same is true about the association of two or more youngsters who incite each other to delinquency. The exposition of cases will serve to make the matter clear and to show the absolute necessity there is for digging deeply when attempting to uproot delinquent tendencies developed even under such clearly seen conditions as gang activities.

Age of Organization.—As Stanley Hall and Sheldon point out, one may rightfully think of the gang spirit as an age phenomenon. However, one would not care to dogmatize on the point because of the greatly varying environmental conditions and also because of the differing physical and mental abilities of individual children. While it is true, as Sheldon says, that predatory organizations are strongest among children of eleven to fifteen years

of age, yet we have met very clever young thieves who have been taken into a gang before that age. Of course these organizations in city life also hang together much later than after the fifteenth year. If there are leaders in an organization who are willing to take the trouble of dealing with younger children, or when especially promising recruits among children even as young as eight or ten years are discovered, the youngsters may be received in the gang, but practically never before that age. There is a strong tendency to disband in later adolescence, so that the gang spirit undoubtedly does reach its maximum intensity somewhere about fourteen or fifteen years.

Case of a Gang Organized for Adventure.—The following case illustrates, as well as any I know, the compelling spirit of adventure that may be created in a gang when possibly no one member of it possesses the spirit in unusual degree. We studied the case of an unusually bright and intelligent looking boy of eleven, with a finely modeled head and captivating manners. He is the son of Slavic immigrants, the mother being a gentle and refined creature, and the father a drunken brute, who, after a few years in this country, deserted his wife. The boy had a splendid record in school and was liked everywhere. Of course he had very few possessions in his own poor home. He and a number of neighboring boys feasted themselves on cheap books of adventure, and also, visually, on the guns and

other articles exhibited in the windows of a sporting goods establishment in the manufacturing town where they lived. Of the two influences I question whether this shop window was not the stronger. The crowd of six or seven boys essayed several little adventures together on the sand dunes, and finally a much larger escapade was planned. We have yet to know how much the others were directly implicated in a burglary that was committed, since our little boy always demonstrated his spirit of loyalty to the crowd and did not tell, but at last he himself entered the sporting goods store at night and stole a valuable lot of goods for them. Guns, cartridges and appurtenances were buried, and with some of the money taken they provisioned themselves for their expedition. Nobody dreamed that the burglary could have been committed by such a small and innocent looking boy, and no suspicion fell on any of his crowd until they had been out on their travels for a couple of days and had shot through the windows of a sportsman's club, miles away from their homes. When apprehended for this they had offered in true sportsman-like fashion to pay for the damage. After the police had the affair in hand, confession was freely made by our boy, who took the entire blame on himself. It was very difficult to know what to do about this case; for a time the boy was tried in the old neighborhood, but it soon became evident that he could not succeed there, after having given himself such an extraordinary repu-

tation and being looked up to by the other boys as a sort of hero. He had to be sent to an institutional school.

Treatment of Adventuresome Gang Spirit.—The treatment of this type of case demands both repressive and constructive measures. The mother of our boy was too poor to do much about it, and although she had long seen the danger, she said, of his going with the little band of adventurers, yet she could not afford him any legitimate forms of counteractivities. The head of the school that he attended had also seen the problem and anticipated trouble, but nothing could be offered from that side, for it was the typical educational plant with no provision made for activities out-of-doors, or for furthering healthful forms of recreation. There is very little effect to be expected from admonishment and attempted repression in such instances. On the other hand, this type of case presents a fair field for developing substitutive activities.

The Gang with Secret Social Life.—Markedly different from the above in its practical aspects is the delinquency originating from gang life where the bond of union is merely social existence in secret. Typical of this is the case of a boy of fourteen whom we studied. It was peculiarly interesting because the parents of this lad recognized the bare fact of his trouble being caused by crowd associations, and had moved miles away into the outskirts of the city to remove him from this bad

influence. They had repeatedly warned him and punished him, but had never thought of inquiring into the real nature of the crowd's hold on him. It was another case where the parents' "don't" was entirely inadequate. They knew that he had been engaged in some petty stealing prior to their moving away, but after this he took some money from home, and to their great sorrow, disappeared for a week or so. A month or two later he ran away a second time. This boy's associations, at the time of our study of him, were traced by a skilled social worker, and it was found that his crowd met in a huge, old-fashioned tenement building. After a little it was discovered that they had in the basement a secret room where much smoking and reading of cheap novels went on. Their life was that of a jolly crowd of buccaneers, provisioned and armed. They were quite willing to spend their money for the common weal, but of course they often ran out of financial resources, and their supplies were then replenished by petty thieving. They were not banded together for the direct purpose of thievery, nor did they appear to indulge in any extremely bad habits of any kind. They were held by the mere fact that they had a secret organization and a secret home for their society, and that while together they enjoyed democracy and independence.

Treatment of the Social Gang Spirit.—If stealing arises, as in the above case, as incidental to crowd necessities, the real underlying conditions must be

first ascertained in order that the delinquency be squarely met. The need for social life itself must be taken care of either by getting something better for the whole crowd to do or else by turning the particular individual toward new phases of social life. We know of one most interesting instance where a healthy-minded social worker became initiated as a loyal member of such a secret society, which had even more elaborate paraphernalia than the one we have described, and who succeeded after a time in entirely altering the activities of the whole organization. This was brought about by the introduction of a better class of reading, not of course on the namby-pamby order, but books of really enticing adventure, far more attractive than the cheap books the crowd had been reading, and by the development of the spirit of self-interest through gradually teaching them what bad air and constant smoking meant for them. It would be useless to expect one boy to stand out against a crowd of his fellows in the attempt to get a bettered state of affairs among them, so if no alteration of their collective activities can be made, the only hope is to arouse new interests in the boy to keep him away from the gang—this can be done best in connection with removal from the neighborhood. Indeed, when considering at all this matter of stealing which arises from gang influences, one of the chief points to remember is that the measure of greatest safety is in change of environmental conditions, particularly

by removal or sending the boy away so that he be not taunted or accused of the most dastardly of crimes in the annals of youth, namely, disloyalty and quitting. Very many times after study of a case in consultation with parents, we felt that the only safeguard for the boy was complete removal from the old sphere of activities.

Gang with Bond in Bad Habits.—Some cases of stealing found most difficult to handle by even intelligent parents and teachers show development of tendencies through the influence of associates who have clubbed together on the basis of some mutual understanding that was not in the least surmised by the observers. An example is the following: A boy of thirteen, endowed above the average, both mentally and physically, who had stood well in his school until a year or so previously, had been creating for his well-to-do parents an immense amount of trouble. They had tried to do much for him; the father had even taken him away on hunting trips, but there was frequently recurring trouble in the home town. The boy many times had stolen from home and repeatedly from shops. On several occasions he had stayed away over night. His family knew he was going with a crowd of which they did not approve, and felt that he was probably supplying them with money and other things he had taken. They managed to keep him away from these companions for short periods; always, however, in spite of punishments and promises he re-

turned to them. The parents supposed that the bond of interest was the spirit of adventure, because the boys assembled in a hut in the woods or stayed at times in an empty box car. Apparently there were no excessively bad habits, and the only delinquency known was the stealing. After long trying to alter the situation, these most excellent parents felt their helplessness. An analysis of the situation undertaken by us with the boy soon showed that he had been keeping to himself the fact that the crowd met together largely on the basis of secret knowledge. They had gradually initiated one another into the mysteries of sex life and, while they did not ostensibly gather for this, at their meeting places they spent much time in discussing these things, and sometimes mutually engaging in bad sex habits. This is only one of a long series of such instances that I have known.

Here we have the delinquent act, stealing; back of this the gang; the union of the crowd being based on secret communications and secret practises. Without knowledge of the three main links of such a chain very little in the way of successful treatment can be afforded. In several instances I have known that a very great deal has been done for the individual, but as long as the real source of the bad conduct was not discovered and checked there was a constant tendency for it to show itself. Now, the definite treatment of such a case involves thorough exploration of the essential nature of the back-

ground, and a fair meeting of the situation by the parents or other guardians. To gloss the matter over and let a professional consultant be the only one who attempts guidance very often does not suffice, we find. The parents themselves must win the confidence of the child and supplant the pernicious mental activities by better thoughts and better occupations. Sex affairs themselves are not under discussion here, but this is one of the several places where they are related to stealing. It makes a difficult situation for a boy to have to meet through companionship constant renewal of thoughts and suggestions concerning such things as the secrets we have mentioned.

Treatment of Case of Bad Habits in Crowd.—Certainly, here again, the best measure to be carried out at first is a change of scene and a total change of companionship. In our experience difficulty in doing this forms one of the most marked disadvantages of poverty; here when a definite problem of moral import to the individual and to society is comprehended there is little chance to carry out the absolutely essential measures. The successes we have seen, where there was not poverty, in the reformation of such a case as the above are to be compared to the failure after failure among the poor, even after the cause has been discovered. Perhaps it is hardly fair to put the blame entirely on poverty, however, for probably the ignorance and incapacity of the parents were even more to blame. At any

rate, the main point is that if such secret organizations are not thwarted by constructive treatment and the individual is not given other interests, the chance of the stealing or the other delinquency being continued is great indeed.

The Neighborhood Thieving Crowd.—A crowd spirit entirely different from anything mentioned so far is found in our urban communities where in certain neighborhoods some of the older people have felt the sting of poverty so keenly that they are willing to connive at stealing and develop active disrespect for property rights. Such conceptions held by parents quickly filter through to the children who, taking up with these ideas, are found to be more nimble and are less blamed by the police. We have known numerous cases such as the following: A boy of twelve belonging to a community made up largely of Lithuanians and Polish people, himself evidently the most intelligent of the crowd with whom he goes, gives us a fair explanation of the whole neighborhood situation. He has been repeatedly reported to the school people and to the police authorities for stealing. In his school he is reckoned as an industrious and right-minded boy. His parents are also more intelligent than their neighbors and corroborate what he says. It is a community of recent immigrants. There is considerable poverty and drunkenness among them. They live near railroad tracks. When a man is out of work and credit is low he can either attempt to get

things by stealing or appeal to the charity organizations. Stealing is dangerous for a man. His wife, however, goes upon the tracks and picks up coal, his children do likewise. It is only a short step from this to their bolder exploits of breaking seals on cars and taking out bags of flour or tubs of butter, or of loading up a bag of grain to be sold. As this boy puts it, everybody steals around there who can. Further investigation of the neighborhood shows that more than one woman has been fined for stealing from cars and that it is a common thing to see them on the railroad tracks. This boy and his companions readily acknowledge that they have been warned by their teachers, and even by the police, to desist, and though they only range from eight to fourteen years of age they have already been haled into court. The teacher writes that no one can blame the boys; they are victims of their environment, and so it seems.

Treatment of Neighborhood Thieving. — In considering treatment for this sort of stealing we must allow for the part that neighborhood sentiment plays in the formation of a stealing crowd. These boys could not carry out their depredations alone; it requires their united action. For the breaking up of the practise social measures are necessary that will take into account the needs of this special community. Relief of poverty might well in some cases first involve stopping the drinking habits.

This was certainly the fact in the instance we cite. The backing which these people give one another in the idea that stealing is permissible for them can only be controverted by altering their general conditions. Disciplining a number of parents and children, if the discipline is severe enough, may alter the situation, but not nearly so likely is this to be effective as the introduction of measures for their actual social betterment. The treatment of the stealing by the juveniles involves considering the conditions and sentiments of the adults.

Predatory Habits of Gangs.—The same principles hold true of gangs that are specifically predatory. Gangs, just the same as individual offenders, have habitual methods of operation. Some of them specialize on stealing from pedlers' wagons, or taking out junk and anything else they can get from empty buildings. Some center their efforts on sneak thieving in stores, and still others engage habitually in minor burglaries. The thieving tendencies of gangs are formed by habit, and there is just as much difference between them as there is between the operations of a pickpocket and a bank burglar, neither of whom overstep each other's professional lines for a moment. I remember two boys who came from poor families, but who were not without chances, inasmuch as the principal of their school, a fine social worker, tried to advance their interests in every way. These two lads could not

keep away from a little gang, not made up entirely of boys from the immediate neighborhood, a gang that did nothing out of the way except to haunt the public markets and steal fowls and produce. Even when the older members of the crowd had been arrested and sent away, and the others thoroughly warned, the smaller boys, as if impelled by fate, continued right along in their old lines of delinquency.

The Strength of the Crowd Habit.—Whatever a boy might do were he alone, when with others he is pretty sure to follow the crowd spirit. And, then, the habitual tendency of a member of a gang as soon as he leaves his own doorstep, is to seek out his fellows. The mother's tale often is that others call for her boy, that they whistle for him and go he will. If shut in, he jumps through windows; he slips out half clothed, or he even gets away to join the crowd after his parents have gone to sleep. All the force of his habitual mental associations is aroused by his comrade's cry. Or if he is already on the street, merely to walk past the house where his companion lives, or near the place where the fellows gather, is sufficient to put him under the spell of the established gregarious habit.

Breaking Up Undesirable Crowd Connections.—Realizing how important crowd life may be in the career of boys who steal, occasionally also in the cases of girls, a serious consideration must be

treatment that is directed toward breaking up the social habits that engender the delinquency. We have seen scores of cases in which the struggle has been made against the delinquency with full knowledge of the facts of companionship, but without any alteration of the environmental conditions; under such conditions very rarely indeed has there been any success. We should counsel in all such cases that there be a direct attack on the main source of the trouble; this will necessitate often a removal of the delinquent from the scene of misconduct and from the companionship of those with whom the stealing was engaged in. The objection, particularly of poor parents, that it costs too much to move is quite beside the mark, because frequently the actual money outlay for a thieving boy in the course of a few years is vastly more than moving expenses. Even from the monetary standpoint there may be much saving by the breaking up of gang habits. To be sure, we have known of cases where a youngster, whose family had moved out to the suburbs on account of him, returned at the expense of much trouble to himself to his old neighborhood fellows, but it was always where the only thing done had been the removal of residence, and there had been no reconstructive features added to the boy's life. There is homesickness for a crowd, just as truly as there is for family life, and it can only be overcome by affording new mental interests.

Everything depends, we have found where there has been thieving in a crowd, on effectively breaking up the desire for the pernicious companionship.

Social Temptations Derived from School Group.—Stealing, as crowd behavior, is sometimes illustrated by the conduct of a group of school children, who merely meet in their school relationship and are not banded together for anything like predatory reasons, but who nevertheless are affected by certain social influences which lead them to stealing. More than a few times we have known of girls secretly taking money from home because other members of the school group regularly spent money with the crowd; the delinquent ones did not always want to appear as recipients of favors. Then, too, we have seen the effect of a once established reputation for spending, if the child ceases to have the opportunity of honestly spending freely, on account of some change in family circumstances, it may hurt deeply to sacrifice social recognition thus gained. We have known of recourse to stealing lest a break occur in such an established reputation. The effect of companionship may be the same socially and morally when it is dress which is the chief matter of concern. If a girl, for instance, no longer can have the good clothes which her family could afford when in better circumstances, or if a girl persistently goes with others who dress better than she can, the temptation to steal may be great indeed. Children sometimes go to great extremes and concoct curious plans

in the attempt to avoid social slurs. Much lying may be indulged in by way of explanation of possession of articles of dress about which their families inquire. The articles may be taken from other children or shops. We have known some instances where girls in their endeavors to keep up to the dressing pace of their companions at school have left stolen fineries in other girls' homes under various pretexts and have gone there on their way to school to adorn themselves so that the family might not know that they had these things.

Rich Older Friends May Be a Danger.—We are constrained to call attention to the vicious results under present-day conditions of the companionship, of boys in particular, with older people of affluence, and especially to the great danger of overliberality of the elders under these conditions. A good example of this is found in the effect in some cases of boys caddying for wealthy men at golf links. This is not the place to speak of certain direct dangers in such places through the boy seeing undesirable and even immoral conduct. We may here note merely the bearing of this sort of companionship on our present subject, stealing. We have come to know of some striking cases where the outcome of a boy being plentifully supplied with money during the golf season led to the acquirement of tastes and habits that could only be satisfied by thieving at other times of the year. A very bright lad who had gone so far in his stealing as to

break into a post-office at night, with great perspicacity phrases the matter to us. He was only a lad of thirteen, with a good school record, who had done well at home. He outlined his delinquent career with vividness, stating definitely that it was the habit of having money given him that had ruined him. He had been much noticed at a certain golf club for his brightness, we heard from other sources, and several liberal men in an offhand way had given him heavy tips. His parents felt that as long as he earned the money he ought to be able to do with it as he pleased. These earnings ran from one to three dollars a day during the season. One rich man in particular, with a kindly heart no doubt, but with an utterly careless method, would give him one or two dollars at a time by way of a tip. This boy treated himself and others to all sorts of amusements and eatables during the season, and when this closed he felt himself as deprived as a millionaire might who had been reduced to penury. His recourse was to petty stealing, which during the course of one winter went to lengths that astounded his friends.

Temptations Through Association with Richer Companions.—From our extensive experiences with older delinquents, such as young forgers and embezzlers, we must emphasize the fact that analysis of some of these careers has shown clearly that their tendencies arose during childhood as a result of habitual companionship with children richer than

themselves. The effect of constant sharing with these their wider opportunities and enjoying their expenditures was the acquisition of a point of view and the formation of social habits that could only be satisfied through the possession of more money than the individual could get honestly. This pathway is so easily recognized that we need not take time to give illustrations of how it has been followed. Beginnings may be in high-school life or earlier. The evils of such companionship are not confined to private schools; groups and social cliques may foster it under even public school conditions. Temptation exists in this for both boys and girls. Where minor delinquencies are indulged in with richer companions, no doubt the glamour of these adds to the trouble. Secret theater going and candy eating on the part of the girls; clandestine pool playing, smoking, drinking, dice throwing and other gambling in the case of the boys, form the types of behavior particularly pernicious in such companionship. We find that stealing in order to satisfy the demands of such social life is not at all uncommon in children. Parents should be on the lookout for the dangers that may ensue from their children associating with others who engage in habits that they can not permit.

Handling the Above Type of Case.—The treatment of the situation, when children are in danger from such companionship as we have just outlined, is not always easy. We might suggest that preven-

tion is usually a hundred times easier than cure later, when social habits and desires have been strongly formed. Particularly after thieving has been indulged in, it is difficult to know how best to proceed, because of the possibility of prolonged stigmatization of the individual that may follow on exposure and radical social changes without any other environmental alterations. There can be no doubt, of course, that for prevention or treatment of the stealing tendency already developed, breaking up of the old associations is most desirable. But only taking the child away from previous social connections produces deep chagrin and invites failure. Much better is complete removal from the given locality, perhaps by sending the child away to relatives, or to another school. In the cases that we have known to fail, the trouble has been largely due to an exhibition of leniency on the part of the parents, or else to their failure to take in completely and act on the grave dangers of the situation. One might say to parents, in general, that while it is much the easiest way to make light of children's delinquencies of this kind, nothing is so fraught with danger to the offender himself as a weak parental attitude.

Danger of Companionship with Delinquents.—It seems hardly necessary for us in this work to speak of the dangers of possible companionship with older delinquents. Guardians with any intelligence need not be addressed on this matter except to say

that there is much more of it going on than they are aware. No doubt it applies mostly to children of the poor, and under the conditions of congested city life, but cases of such companionship are frequently found elsewhere, and in very different circles. It is a curious and interesting fact that gregarious traits are strongly shown by the majority of delinquents. The exhibition of these tendencies runs all the way from the deliberate teaching of children to steal by professional crooks, to the mere feeling of desire for companionship that leads an older boy or girl to take a younger one along when he sets out on an expedition in delinquency. Just as your thoroughgoing bank burglar is often on the lookout for a younger person of the same stripe to train with him, so many thieves are keen to train children in their arts. The day even for "schools of crime" is unfortunately not yet over, but more particularly we should emphasize the vast dangers that we have learned exist in the companionship of children with delinquents, particularly older boys who have developed considerable knowledge of thieving. We have known instances where a boy, becoming adept in the ways of delinquency, perhaps having been in court on account of stealing, and perhaps having come from some institution where more delinquency was learned, has taught and induced dozens of others to pursue at least some distance along his path.

Parents and School People Responsible for Pernicious Companionship.—When the companionship with delinquents is the result of neighborhood life, parents themselves are responsible because they have not obtained full information about the companions of their children, but when these affiliations are formed through the school it is the school authorities themselves who are to blame. Society has no right to throw together, almost forcibly, as is done under provisions of the school law, individuals who in their associations are almost bound to contaminate and be contaminated. I acknowledge that this is a very difficult matter to control, but unless special legal or social provisions recognize the danger, there is bound to be trouble. The fact of such delinquency-producing companionship is one of the strongest outstanding features of any study that can be made of delinquency among children. For the parents, teachers and other guardians of childhood to whom this volume is particularly addressed, we may specially call attention to the fact that in our studies of the causative factors of delinquency among repeated offenders, one of the strongest findings was the effect of bad companions. By this we mean that very frequently the individual's whole delinquent career was started from a point when some other social offender influenced him toward wrongdoing.

CHAPTER V

DISCIPLINE

WE have had occasion to consider the question of discipline from many angles. As a first statement we may insist that our experience leads us to believe that early vigorous discipline is not to be forsworn in the treatment of youthful delinquency. If one were to take the testimony of some scores of boys who have spoken to us on this point he would hear that their failure to receive sharp parental discipline is considered by them the cause of the development of delinquent tendencies. Boys, yes, and sometimes girls, have said, "My father (or my mother) was too easy on me." "I guess my dad should have used the strap; he never did." "If I had been punished when I began this I would not have got into such bad ways." And so one could go on giving many quotations, all to the same purport, namely, that the offender felt that his career might have been checked earlier through discipline. (It would be possible to go still further and consider the statement of professional criminals who make it plain in their moments of candor that the reason

they do not discontinue in their paths is that public authorities do not offer sufficient disciplinary incentives.)

Failure of Discipline Alone.—But that discipline may be an utter failure all recognize. The child beaten for misdoings may repeat exactly the same faults, or become embittered and so react in other unfortunate directions. Many such cases we have had occasion to know well, but the reader may be spared the ugly details of corporal punishment where it has been administered in full measure without bringing about any character changes. The facts being so, we may go back to consideration of the causes for the failure of such discipline. Punishment that does not take into account the underlying factors of conduct and that leaves these as they were before, is a most unreasonable procedure. Unfortunately there is a great deal of likeness between this and the treatment that is carried out under the criminal law. In well-conducted juvenile courts there is attempt to avoid unreasoning application of mere discipline, through the use of social and scientific methods of diagnosis and treatment. In home and school life, with which we are here concerned, there is little excuse for an irrational approach to the problem.

Causations Are Not Met by Discipline.—In any contemplation of discipline the point should be raised whether it meets the situation at all. May there not be causative conditions in the individual,

or in the environment; may there not be the formation of mental and social habits; may there not be any one of a hundred other points which should first be investigated and understood? Common sense itself would indicate such an attempt at understanding before introducing any severe measures of discipline. Sometimes, even when the facts are known and the causations are going to be met, a certain amount of discipline may be necessary to give the first stimulus toward change of conduct; but every case must be carefully measured according to its own needs.

Efficacy of Punishment.—It would seem strange to have to argue at all for the efficacy of immediate personal punishment, but in certain circles a sentiment against this sort of discipline has grown up, largely, we think, on the basis of limited experience. Punishment properly conducted at just the right time, and without many of the unfortunate features that lead to its failure and to the development of undesirable reactions in the punished, is based on thoroughly sound psychological considerations. One of the prime determinants of behavior is whether or not a given type of action is associated in the mind with gratifying or with unpleasant experiences. If the idea or mental imagery of certain conduct or impulses calls up at once the memory of undesirable resultants in previous experience, a tendency to check the specific behavior is automatically set in force. Conduct it-

self may be thought of in terms of impulses and of inhibitions of impulses.

Discipline as Deterrent to Unfortunate Formation of Habits.—During the early formative periods of life, before the individual becomes addicted to the many automatisms which adult life displays, the chance for influencing behavior tendencies by the association of unpleasant ideas is much greater than it is later. Habit formation, as applied to our present subject, means that the child who shows a tendency to steal does not have presented to his consciousness sufficient ideas of unpleasantness when he voluntarily, or perhaps partially unconsciously and by way of impulsion, renews the thought of theft. One might say of the chronic thief that, had there been early in his delinquent career adequate juxtaposition of the concept of suffering with the concept of stealing, these two elements of his mental content, by virtue of the laws of mental association, would, on occasion, have reproduced themselves in their original logical relationship and prevented the development of his career of misbehavior.

Values of Discipline Essentially Psychological.—The essential value of discipline, then, is really psychological and should be based on what is known of the laws of mind. In the light of the latter, it is sure that one of the strongest methods of preventing misbehavior is by the *prompt* and

early meeting of bad conduct by sharp discipline—before, in the given connection, other associative habits of mind have been formed. (Certainly, however, even at the earliest delinquency special causes should be ascertained and dealt with.) The laws of mind are often to be seen working in their simplest phases in the feeble-minded, and we have noted with interest that some of the best equipped students of mental defectives say that punishment, even physical, at highly selected moments, may be most beneficial in the production of good conduct among defectives. The feeble-minded certainly often remember, above all things, that such and such behavior was directly followed by pain, and this tends more strongly than anything else to be a counteractive and deterrent impulse. The same may also be said about other types who, by reason of mentality, or even physical conditions, are not up to par in their powers of self-control. A little aid, as it were, from the outside in pointing out the paths of rectitude, and impressing these on their associative processes, however automatic or unconscious the latter may be, is not to be despised.

Forms of Discipline.—The forms of discipline to be applied in these cases where it may prove beneficial are not easy to deal with here. As we noted above, in order that there may be compliance with standard requirements of psychological laws, one essential is that the punishment shall be so inti-

mately connected mentally with the fault that any repetition of the impulse brings at once to mind the painful experience.

Dangers of Deferred Punishment.—This leads us to see that a deferred punishment is apt to defeat its own purpose. The method that we have found in some households, where the child is informed that a beating will be forthcoming when the father returns at night, or perhaps at the end of a week when he returns from a business trip, is altogether lacking in psychological discernment, because the behavior and the punishment are not contiguous in time. Between the two events there is the opportunity for development in the child's mind of unfortunate ideas concerning the punishment itself. Not the least of the possibilities is the nervous trouble that a long contemplated whipping may produce. I have known of a number of cases where a child was greatly racked in spirit and much disturbed nervously by the thought of what was coming. There may be even greater misfortune in the development of a grudge against the parent who is coming home to avenge. From no such procedure as this can a constructive helpful régime be built up.

Short Immediate Punishment Best.—The short, the sharp and immediate punishment is by far the best. I, for one, in the light of the fact that some children so willingly inflict pain on others, am not at all against the infliction of some form of quick corporal punishment on them. We may grant

that giving pain evolves evoking the crudest measures of discipline at command, but children, or at least some children, are best appealed to by just such simple methods. Here again, however, there must be intelligent selection of both the individual and the occasion. Two children, even in the same family, may respond in a totally different manner to the same kind of discipline.

Later Punishment Should Include Restitution. —The trouble in this matter of stealing is, of course, that discipline is only rarely to be carried out at anything like the same time when the misbehavior occurred. The theft may not be found out until long after it has been committed; only too often there have been hours and days of denial in which the truth has not been known. In such cases, unless the affair can be staged properly, as it were, and there is a chance for establishing in the individual's mind a forceful relationship between fault and punishment, making an indelible mark upon him, there is little use in carrying out sharp discipline. Much more sane in these cases that have continued along, it is to make the offender work hard in some way to refund whatever loss there has been. A mere slight deprivation that is sometimes carried out by way of punishment, is apt to make the whole affair one of give and take, and future consideration of a like offense may involve the offender's debating whether the pleasures of delinquency overbalance a possible deprivation.

Punishment for Petty Stealing from Parents.—In certain stealing by young children of which we have heard so often, where small sums of money have been taken from parents for small pleasures, I would hold to immediate punishment in which some sort of painful experience is given, and then that there be inflexible insistence on restitution. By painful experience I do not necessarily mean whipping; there are other punishments, such as being put to bed without any playthings, or, if the child is robust, being forced to go hungry for a meal, or anything that immediately fits the special case.

Punishment Versus Prevention.—One method of dealing with children's dishonesty that has often come to our notice should be mentioned because of its peculiar aspects. I speak of the treatment by those parents who insist that the only way to prevent their child from stealing is to place tempting things under lock and key. If one gets heavy enough locks this is, of course, one form of prevention, and fulfils the purpose which the parents seem to have mostly in mind, namely, the preservation of their property, but we would insist from practical observation of many cases, that this proves anything but conducive to the building up of character. Indeed, we are not sure but that it is a direct challenge and stimulus to misbehavior, rather than the corrective measure that the parents believe it to be. Ultimate resistance to the impulse to steal is not gained through negation of opportunity to

steal; the world offers and will continue to offer plenty of opportunities. In this respect the household should resemble the outside world; the sooner the usual social situation is faced the better it will be for the development of the child. This negative form of alleged discipline has little to commend it, for it reckons neither with causes, nor with the building up of internal strengths on the part of the child so that unfortunate impulses may be resisted.

Necessity for Individualization of Punishment. —Those who assume the rôle of critic will always find it easy enough to pick flaws in the methods of discipline offered by guardians of children who are partially moral failures. Likewise it is just as simple to deplore lack of punishment in such cases. What the family friend, the teacher, or the juvenile court judge when the case comes into court, says to the parents about their failure may be often true, but nevertheless the outsider should realize that the adjustment of delinquent problems through discipline is frequently not at all an easy matter. We find ourselves not much inclined to generalize on this matter, not even to assume any of the standpoints taken by the best philosophical students of general ethical problems. Again, by our realization of the immense complexity of the problem, the many varieties of mental capabilities, tendencies and traits, and the huge differences in experiences that make character reactions, we are thrown back to the idea that the matter of discipline is one for highly

individualized considerations. I am almost inclined to condemn the general adoption in an institution or in a family of set methods of punishment, or of refraining from punishment, for that matter, as much as I am the type of action represented by the blow administered in anger. In all matters pertaining to the form of treatment for delinquency the guardian of the child should be at least a common-sense student of the child's needs and peculiarities.

CHAPTER VI

AMUSEMENT AND ADVENTURE

THE lines of causation connecting dishonesty with amusement run in several directions. Stealing may afford the child the means of obtaining specially desired amusements; the impulse to steal may be developed through attending places of harmful amusement; or stealing itself can be a form of amusement. All of these deserve some discussion.

Stealing in Order to go to Public Entertainments.—To steal in order to get money for amusements is all too common. It occurs more frequently, of course, among the poor, but even in better-off families the child may not be allowed enough to satisfy the desire for amusements that cost money. With the rapid increase, during recent years, of places of public amusement that cater to children this cause of stealing has been greatly developed. And it is bound to be a problem of American town life until parents and the community are educated up to the point of realizing the fact and acting on it, until drastic measures are taken to prevent children from acquiring inordinate and un-

healthy desire for public entertainment. We ourselves have seen scores of cases where a child's stealing was the result of artificially stimulated craving for exciting amusement.

The Habitual Craving for Exciting Entertainment.—The development of a latter-day habit involving the craving for exciting entertainment demands earnest consideration. There are a number of features of modern life that unfortunately tend to produce this habitual craving. Speaking of the results first, these may take the form of restless desire, and occasionally of behavior that almost resembles that of a drug habitué. Thieving may then be indulged in for the purpose of getting funds for satisfying the craving. The strength of the desire for exciting entertainment may be witnessed to by many a record of youthful peculation. Not only this, but we have known children with the craving so strongly implanted that they will undergo much physical discomfort in order that the desired excitation be obtained. The place of amusement to the child may be like the flame to the moth—the consequences are not foreseen, all the child feels is the attraction.

Moving Pictures Influencing Toward Stealing.—Nowadays there are two types of public amusement that lead to intense craving for the exciting stimulation which they afford. In this discussion we are interested in them because of their relationship to stealing, and we may begin by considering

the influence of moving-picture shows. One might talk at length from general impressions about the effect which these shows possibly have on the youthful part of our population, but I have always insisted in such matters on dealing with known facts. Many mistakes are otherwise made through preconceived notions about what the influences may or may not be. We could offer many examples from our studies, but the following single case will serve to bring out the main points.

Case of Stealing Caused by Craving for Picture Shows.—A boy of eleven years whom we studied was found to have decidedly good ability, and was a most attractive child. His family had immigrated four years previously. His home was good from a moral standpoint, but on account of poverty there was little to satisfy his particularly active mental needs, although the other children got along all right. The home was, on the whole, better than that of many of the neighbors, where the children remained honest. As the result of going to picture shows with money given to him by his parents, and particularly from studying the pictorial advertisements outside the shows, this boy developed a completely overwhelming craving for this form of amusement. By the time we were asked to see him it seemed as if nothing could keep him away from the "movies," and there were many in his part of town. His parents allowed his attendance once or twice a week, but this was quite insufficient for him.

In spite of their forbidding him, he went very frequently. He had stolen many times to satisfy this craving and he had repeatedly stayed away from home on account of this misbehavior. The forcefulness of his unfortunate desires was evidenced by the hardships he underwent. He would frequently go without supper so that he would not be held at home and prevented from spending the evening at the shows. Sometimes, through fear of punishment, he slept out in boxes or under steps on cold nights after the last entertainment was ended. He stole money from home or from neighbors, and even shops, and he took articles that he could turn into money—all of it being paid out for tickets to the picture shows. The honest and hard working parents were absolutely unable to cope with this situation, even after we had pointed out the possibilities of handling him through the utilization in other directions of his good abilities or through developing in him new recreational interests. After long trial, the situation, namely, that he had developed a habit which it was impossible under home conditions for him to conquer, became absolutely clear and was freely acknowledged by the lad and he was sent to an institution. This case, watched by us over a considerable period, is a fair example of many which we have seen.

Notions of Stealing Learned from the Shows.—It has been generally assumed that moving-picture shows are a great influence in giving children the

impulse to steal. While it is true that in our years of experience we have seen sporadic instances of this sort, where the details of thieving and burglary were first learned from pictorial representation and then carried out, yet this type of causation has been encountered surprisingly seldom. Perhaps if there were less vigilant censorship, pictures that represent some glorification of thieving might be produced, but actually there is very little of such presentation. References in shows to stealing are usually made quite incidentally and with following up of the thief's career, showing that the outcome is not a desirable one. Let the good censorship continue and I think we will have little to fear from picture shows giving any direct impulse toward stealing.

Amusement Parks Incentives to Stealing.—Another type of public entertainment that particularly leads to thieving is that offered by the amusement or summer parks that are to be found in many American cities. (To some extent the same class of amusement is to be found in country fairs. We ourselves have had cases of stealing connected with these fairs brought to us, but, of course, in the country the temptation is rare.) The glare, the glamour and freedom of these parks particularly attract children, and the many opportunities for spending small sums in exciting ways lead to overwhelming desire for money. On account of the many inviting possibilities, comparatively large

sums are often stolen. We have known of children purloining as much as five dollars or ten dollars for the purpose of completely enjoying themselves in an amusement park. The desire is, naturally, a matter of growth after experience in one of these places—perhaps a few visits have been paid to the park in company with parents, or with money given by them. Particularly, we find children inciting in one another a desire to go to such a place. Occasionally they will accumulate funds even by petty stealing, in preparation for a prolonged bout of exciting enjoyment in these parks. Not a few cases of runaway children are found in such places, and the police there can tell of many groups of children who come and spend sums which it is doubtful if they acquired honestly. We have known of numerous cases of stealing for this purpose.

Prevention of Attendance by Unaccompanied Children.—The problem of children stealing for the purpose of enjoying themselves in places of public amusement could easily be handled by community regulations. It seems perfectly plain that young children should not be allowed in such places unaccompanied by their elders. Even the consideration of the general welfare of young citizens would seem to make it imperative for communities to insist that these places be not open to children during the evening or at other times when they should be at home or in school. Considerations of fatigue, of need for sleep, of eye-strain, of bad ventilation, of

the unhealthfulness of the crowded assemblage, all should figure here. Even one reform, namely, forbidding these public entertainments to young children in the evening, would be a step of importance.

Vacation Schools for Prevention.—As a means of prevention, the proper sort of vacation schools might well be considered. If children were pleasantly occupied in school during the summer many of the temptations and cravings to which we have alluded would not arise. Such special cravings, indicating the possession of peculiar personal traits, such as in the case of the boy we cited above, who was so unduly fond of picture shows, could be made a study of, and counteracted by suitable educational methods. In school life there should be a chance for such discoveries concerning the individual as may indicate the many constructive possibilities there are for modifying character tendencies.

Adventurous Amusement a Cause of Stealing.—The best illustration of stealing engaged in as a form of amusement is found when adventurous excitement is the basis for the delinquency. We have mentioned in our chapter on Companionship the predatory spirit that arises in gang life as the direct result of bad example and teaching. Here we want to dwell more particularly on the child's own love of adventure, as such, normal and abnormal, and show its bearing on thieving. Again, it will not be necessary to burden our pages with many examples, because the general fact is easy of

appreciation. The main point on which we would insist is the practical value of understanding and treating the cause itself. Otherwise, attempts at prevention of the delinquent tendencies are very likely to be a failure.

The Crowd Indirectly Stimulating the Spirit of Adventure.—Whatever the individual may be by himself, as regards being possessed by the spirit of adventure, when with a crowd of boys there frequently arises a peculiar and specific stimulus toward performing deeds of daring. If one looks back to boyhood days, or analyzes behavior which illustrates the characteristics of gang life, one finds that the stimulus itself often is not at all a matter of direct suggestion. When boys come together, a spirit of competition and reckless daring is apt to be at once aroused, irrespective, perhaps, of any words said. The boy who, a few minutes before, was quiet at his own occupations, takes on an attitude and an air of excitement that often leads to conduct quite unlike what he would do if he were alone. Any day in community life this can be observed. The youngster, with his normal lack of self-consciousness, may be all unaware of the changed aspects of his behavior. However, that the worst in a boy comes out when he is with others, I think is not nearly so true a statement as that what is excitable in him flares up in the company of his kind, and that his desire for adventure is thereby increased many fold.

Crowd Spirit of Adventure Leading to Stealing.—Quite apart, then, from individual peculiarities, and particularly quite aside from consideration of those cases where an abnormal love of excitement and adventure is shown, we may see the normal boy, and often the normal girl, presenting in crowd life a tendency toward adventure that is to be studied as a phenomenon by itself in its relationship to stealing. That this really is a crowd-aroused tendency is shown by the fact that the stealing has no relationship to the actual needs of the individual. Indeed the offender may wonder, after he is in trouble, how he could have lost his own point of view and been spurred on to such unexpected and irrational conduct.

Illustrative Instance of Crowd Stealing.—A number of years ago in Washington there occurred an affair which illustrates the point so clearly that the facts are worth relating. In a certain school which the children from the families of prominent officials and diplomats attended, during a number of weeks there occurred a series of remarkable thefts. Many things were taken, books, school supplies, bicycles and other things belonging to the children. Valuable articles were also taken from the neighborhood. Now, what stood in the way of early detection of the delinquents was that they were not even considered as being the possible offenders. When the affair was finally run down it was found that about fourteen or fifteen boys with creditable

previous records, of good school standing, many of them coming from notable families, had steadily been plundering. They had a cave or retreat to which the goods were taken and from which they were recovered. The pecuniary side entered very little into the transaction, for while some articles had been sold, yet the amount derived had been nothing comparable to the sums readily obtainable from the parents by these same boys. The whole affair was essentially one of predatory adventure carried to an extreme by individuals who came from family circumstances that offered no possible excuse for the stealing.

Change of Character When in a Crowd.—It is quite within the truth to say that children who think it sneaky and wrong to steal when alone, may under crowd excitement be willing to enter into a thieving adventure, even to the point of selling plunder. There is often an element of danger that adds zest and flavor. I think it is this and the excitement involved in the destruction of property that leads a group of young adolescents to do so much damage in an empty house or in an unguarded shop.

Prevention Demands Realization of the Possibilities.—The common-sense points for prevention of delinquency caused in this way include realization of the changes in behavior that are produced by crowd life. Many a mother who confines her understanding of her boy to what she sees of him may be quite right when she says that the

stealing is absolutely unlike his general behavior, but quite wrong when she argues from this the impossibility of his stealing while with other boys.

Provision for Normal Crowd Activities.—Prevention often means allowance for the needs of crowd activity. Since the tendency to congregate is natural in boys, wholesome congregate activities should be supplied. Boys' athletics and supervised play under a director in a playground are both means to this end. If any be disinclined toward such public or semi-public provisions because of expense, let them remember that many a criminal, as we know by our studies, has gained his unfortunate attitude toward the world and first formed his habits of delinquency through crowd activities that, under his environmental conditions, could not be considered in the least abnormal.

Extraordinary Love of Adventure.—The love of adventure that, as a personal trait, shows itself to be beyond normal bounds requires separate consideration. It is quite a different thing from the spirit of adventure aroused by crowd life. The relationship between this trait and stealing is easily discerned. In ancient Sparta skill in adventure was directly fostered by the cultivation of adeptness in thieving, and stealing was regarded as a legitimate means for adapting youth to the exigencies of warfare. We in modern life afford our children so few opportunities for exciting adventure that it is not surprising when individuals are occasionally met

who by nature are unsuited, at least during the most active periods of youth, to our comparatively quiet environmental conditions. It is not to be alleged that there is any great number of children who would go to the length of stealing for the pleasure of the excitement derived, but yet the facts in a considerable number of cases are convincing. In not a few instances it stands out clearly that the stealing represents an adventuresome impulse quite out of the ordinary.

Craving for Adventure is Sometimes on a Physical Basis.—The uncommon love of adventure that we are now considering is sometimes correlated with unusual physical conditions. When a boy, or occasionally a girl, is extraordinarily overgrown and has physical capacities that are only slightly called on by environmental demands, then one would naturally expect to find great restlessness and physical longings which, unsatisfied, may be reacted to by adventuresome behavior. We have studied boys of twelve, thirteen and fourteen grown far beyond the normal for their age, and, perhaps, already a head taller than any other member of the family, domiciled in cramped city apartments, who have shown their innate cravings for hazardous predatory excursions. The very physiological nature of these boys is clearly thwarted by their narrow environmental possibilities, even where parents are good and seemingly intelligent.

Craving for Adventure May Exist Without Over-Development.—On the other hand, great restlessness of spirit and love for adventure and excitement sometimes rests on no observable physical basis. Judgment of value on this point can be developed by direct observation of behavior and of bodily condition, and should include analysis of mental life and feelings. One is surprised to find occasionally in a physically normal or even in an under-developed delinquent that the act of stealing has afforded a distinct pleasure. It seemed to be an outlet that had satisfied the craving for excitement. In some it goes so far that thieving is regarded as being sport, as it were, an exciting game that is played. One would hardly believe to what extent this attitude toward delinquency can go unless he has worked out the facts of the situation with some offender whose thieving has this particular cause. The diagnosis of the true nature of the individual is a matter of the utmost importance because if his native traits are not recognized the right adjustment in his case is seldom going to be given.

The Inner Feelings Back of the Craving for Adventure.—Now, it is not often that you get a child with powers of introspection sufficient to enable him to analyze his own feelings that led to stealing; with some the inferences have to be drawn from the objective background of the behavior itself. The real nature of the stimulus to

action and of the satisfaction is plainly brought out in some by their own revelations. In a few instances we have had a chance to carry out a deep inquiry. The offender has definitely stated that he steals because of the excitement this affords him, and when questioned about the appreciation of danger and the feelings of fear, has willingly acknowledged the existence of these elements in his case. Then it comes out that with the child of this type there is apparently a pleasure even in the excitement that approaches fear, including the rapid heart beat, the dry throat and the trembling hand. One most intelligent lad told us that he stole because of the pleasure which the danger afforded him. It was not at all that he wanted so much the things he took, or that he got pleasure out of the money, but in the finding of the place where the money was hidden, and in the planning for taking it, and in the skill required to escape detection, there was for him immense satisfaction. It must not be forgotten that even some girls get pleasure out of similar activities. Individuals who show such characteristics as these may be particularly bright and active in general; they are not at all to be regarded as abnormal.

Love of Adventure Not an Abnormal Trait.—Indeed, the love of adventure is a trait that is not foreign to most of us. That some individuals find satisfaction for it in stealing may be due to prior experience, or to environmental circumstances rather than to any innate peculiarity. It is a thoroughly

understandable phenomenon. Differences between children in this respect should be noted, and their particular needs, if any, should be met by special provisions. The idea that an ordinary city environment, for instance, fits the requirements of all natures is absurd. The inclination that many of us feel at times to break away from the restraints of crowded communities may be regarded as indication of the possible urgencies in natures, which make for such dissatisfaction.

Special Provisions for Ardent Natures.—Society is not offering to youngsters, such as these just mentioned, anything like the chances for being active as obtained a hundred years ago, in the days of sailing vessels, and of pioneering in forests and on the plains, or still farther back in the days of wandering journeymen, three-deckers and the Spanish main. And yet we find occasional natures with as much need for adventure as existed then. We have pointed this out to some parents and occasionally have been fortunate enough to get something like full appreciation of these special needs of a child, and to get some provision for the same. We have noted then a complete cessation of delinquent tendencies. On the other hand, we have seen well-to-do and apparently intelligent parents who have not been willing to face the actual situation, and who later have come to bemoan their lot because their boy was in the penitentiary as the result of a further search for excitement through stealing. I

know very well one case of this kind where the intelligent introspection of the boy years ago led him to see that the main cause of his thieving tendencies was the desire for adventure, and this he never could quench. There are many spheres of activity, honorable and manly, where adventure is a part of every-day work. There is no sufficient reason why mothers and fathers should not perceive the special qualities in a child which make this type of life desirable, any more than they should neglect the abilities that lead them to decide on making the boy a mechanical engineer, or any other type of craftsman.

Stealing as an Occupation.—Allied to the topic of this chapter is stealing engaged in as an occupation, but since we are limiting ourselves to the study of delinquency of children, consideration of occupational thieving seems hardly appropriate here. However, there is no doubt that sometimes during the years of childhood the idea of stealing as an occupation, or a partial occupation, does occur to the individual. In city life the idea comes usually through older thieves; rarely we have known of children, even in a rural community, who have developed their own notions of getting a livelihood through appropriating the possessions of others. In our work we sometimes see a boy who on account of his small size and motor dexterity, plus the suggestions of some one else, is seriously entertaining the idea of becoming a skilful pickpocket. Such chil-

dren may practise the art and really enjoy it. We have known of several instances of very small boys who persisted in this in spite of warnings, until they had to be sent away to institutions. The arts of thieving are sometimes definitely taught, as we mentioned under the head of Companionship, with an occupational idea. Of course, such teachings arise almost entirely from the conditions of poverty, but it may be only comparative poverty, such as others in the same neighborhood bear the strain of without becoming dishonest. In the poorer districts of our cities the idea of stealing as a gainful occupation exists often enough among the young so that teachers and parents should be on the lookout to discover whether or not this most dangerous notion is influencing the child who is stealing.

CHAPTER VII

HABITS—MENTAL, PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL

THE strange masteries over the individual which habits gain should never be overlooked in considering treatment of a case of delinquency. Even in young children, whose tendencies to dishonesty have apparently just begun, underlying habits may be all-important. This chapter will indicate much of what the background in specific habit formations may be. (Every one, for the most practical ends, should be acquainted with what the great psychologists have said on this subject. For instance, no chapter that James ever wrote has been so popularly valuable as the famous one on habit, where he shows both the great values as well as the untoward consequences of habit formation.) At the outset of our discussion we need merely say that the investigation into causation of the stealing in the given case should early include study of the relationship of the delinquency to habits of any kind—social, mental or physical. We all know that the part which habit plays in the every-day working of the human machine is immense, and we should realize that the chance of

the child's refraining in the future from the misconduct may depend on how well some underlying habit has been discovered and conquered.

Mechanics of Habit.—The mechanics of habit formation deserve short consideration. When one particular thought or action follows a given perception or thought, a channel, as it were, is dug, or a track laid down in the nervous system so that hereafter anything bringing the first member of the series into the mental content stands a chance of starting an impulse that follows the previously established path. Some have explained this by saying that along a formerly used channel impulses flow with the least resistance. Some sight or some sound, for example, may bring up an idea, or a mental picture which, flashing through the mind, releases, perhaps quite involuntarily, an impulse to action. Now, what specific action, what type of conduct, is the outcome of the stimulus, may largely depend, even in very young persons, on the relationships and sequences that have previously been established between stimuli and action. The path once trodden beckons on. The force of habit pervades the whole of mental life and, indeed, is one of the main processes that regulate the association of ideas, the fundamental phenomenon of mental life. Habit is also a strong force on the physical side, where it is easily recognized by every one. As demonstrated in the world of social conduct, nothing is more obvious than that one most readily responds

as he has responded before. Altogether it stands out clearly that a reactional response once made stands a greater chance of being repeated than had it never occurred. Lest this be misinterpreted, however, it is to be remembered that this law of our being, as James says, acts oftener for good than for bad.

Forceful Habit Formation.—Another point, although somewhat technical, has such practical bearings for us that we can not afford to neglect it. It is a fact well known to psychologists that any mental reaction that occurs with an extra amount of force is particularly likely to recur. The extra force is added usually through some context or penumbra of emotions centering about the elements of this particular mental process. Now this has especial significance for students of delinquency because the original idea of stealing, for instance, nearly always is accompanied by emotions of various kinds that give it, for the individual, an undue significance. On account of this, from the time of such a first experience, the idea of stealing may be brought into mental life with the greatest readiness. In exaggerated cases the idea recurs with such unfortunate frequency and vividness that it becomes for the individual an obsessive mental habit. But without going to this extent, the force and strength of the reaction so strongly impressed tends more than ordinarily to follow the lines of previously enacted behavior. In other words, through the orig-

inal mental reaction being given extra force, a reactive tendency is formed which has more than usual significance for habit formation. We should judge that this is the mental mechanism in some of the well-marked cases of habitual stealing that we have observed, when it seemed as if the offender was fairly unable to prevent the idea of stealing following on the slightest excuse in the way of an opportunity. It is all out of proportion to the ordinary conduct of every-day life.

Practical Discussion of Habits.—For the eminently practical purposes of this volume we can best neglect the formal standpoint, and discuss various kinds of habits in a single chapter. The living issues can not be better illustrated than through calling attention to the way the individual problem of habit is spoken of by the delinquent and by his immediate observers. With astonishing frequency one has heard the explanation, given perhaps by a young child, that the reason stealing is indulged in is because the habit of stealing has been formed. Or it is said that the stealing is a direct result of some other habit that interferes with moral well-being. All sorts of habits in the social, physical and mental spheres may be thus practically implicated for us, and the significance of habit formation is shown to extend over all these fields. When it comes to stealing, we can show that various habits, either directly or indirectly, may be influencing factors. Here they may together best be considered

from the standpoint of the practical observer who, often fairly enough, says the child's stealing is the result of bad habits. To serve our ends, we may consider habits that have to do with stealing as A, mental; B, physical; and C, social.

A. Mental Habits

Through the dynamics of habit formation, exemplified in the association of ideas, as mentioned above, we might expect to find a considerable amount of stealing brought about by the action of inner mental processes. We need not spend much time in theoretical consideration of this because from our large material we have many illustrative cases. Children in the most ingenuous fashion have told us what goes on in their minds inducing them to steal; and in not a few instances we have obtained positive evidence that a mental habit had been definitely formed and was immediately at fault. The phenomenon itself appeared most important, inasmuch as it showed clearly the way to attack the problem of the individual case. The following illustrations will show in some degree how mental habits may be involved in stealing.

Case of Habitual Ideation.—A boy of twelve whom we studied, proved to be normal physically and mentally. It looked as if he were certainly headed for a criminal career; the parents were much alarmed. We spent considerable time in analyzing the case and found no great difficulty in doing so

because the boy himself seemed now fairly startled into self-consciousness by his own behavior. It appeared that a couple of years previously, once when his father was asleep, he, with probably not more than boyish curiosity, put his hands into his father's pockets. The immediate temptation to take a small coin was succumbed to. The theft was undiscovered. Following this he had much thought about the matter, for it was a desperate thing for an honest boy to do, and about it, at first, he had much emotion. However, the spending of the money had afforded him pleasure. The idea of stealing then began to occur over and over to this boy as a mere mental process, and without any external stimulus in the way of specially perceived desires or needs. It developed in him as a mental habit, of which we obtained a convincing account, mostly expressing itself in the content of his mental life at home in the evening. A long story could be told of this boy's growth of habits and impulses as he naively related them to us, but it is sufficient to say that after some interval he sneakingly took another coin, and then a third, and so on. The habit of thinking about the possibility of stealing from his father grew so that it was fairly obsessional with the boy. It went so far that when he would wake up in the middle of the night his mind would immediately revert to the possibilities of taking money, and sometimes he would long lie awake revolving this idea in his mind. So strong did the obsession finally become that on

two occasions he ran away, rising and dressing himself after midnight, and fleeing the house with money taken from his father's clothes. We were most interested to learn that in no other way had he ever stolen. This shows how impossible it may be to combat such a case without ascertaining the basis of the temptation and tendency which, as we have indicated, was here almost entirely an affair of the boy's own mental processes.

Illustration: Habitual Mental Imagery.—Since we first discovered the remarkable rôle that mental imagery may play in stealing, even by a child, we have been intensely interested in this phenomenon. In some cases it has come out vividly that the stealing impulse arose, not from the least intent or conscious contemplation of stealing, but because there suddenly flashed into the mind a picture that served as the direct forerunner of an impulse to steal. Many varieties of cases could be cited from our experience, showing that the mental picture-making originates in different ways. It is important to note that frequently the picture flashes up as a bare recollection. The following will serve as a fair illustration of the phenomenon.

An entirely normal boy, of good impulses in general, obedient in his family, and well liked in school, became an habitual thief. He proved to be very frank with us, and we had a splendid chance to ascertain beginnings with him. He was a boy of quick reactions. His stealing, he felt sure, always

followed on the presentation in his mind of certain definite pictures. No doubt he had never clearly analyzed the process to himself before, but now on going over the matter again and again with us, it all stood out very vividly. As he explained it, these pictures flashed into his mind, and at once he was impelled by the temptation to steal. In his case the mental content was derived from certain vicious pictures that an older boy had shown him, where the act of stealing was represented in combination with sexualistic affairs. It was his very first introduction to the latter, and involuntarily it made a deep impression on him. After this, anything that suggested either of these two things, namely, illicit sex affairs or stealing, would bring back the pictures in his mind, until their reappearance became a mental habit that he found impossible to break.

After careful study of this case we felt convinced that the often repeated delinquencies were the direct result of this imagery. Indeed we have never seen a case in which cause and effect were more clearly shown. The boy, even as early as we first saw him, at thirteen, felt the need of making a desperate struggle against this habit of his mental life. In the course of our study we found that he had distinctly good visual powers, and could we have had charge of him we would certainly have advocated the building up of other and better, and perhaps more interesting, visual mental content which might have supplanted his previous imagery. His own

struggle, bringing in nothing constructive, was psychologically a weak attempt at treatment, and proved of little value. In his environment this boy with such essentially good desires found no one to help him, even after he worked out the cause of his trouble with us. His conduct was continued until he came into the hands of the law and then he requested to be sent away for a long period.

Imagery from Picture Shows.—Recurrent mental imagery leading to stealing we have observed as the result of frequenting moving-picture shows, but nothing like so often as one might suppose. Indeed, children who go to such shows see good things as well as bad, and on this account there may be much counteracting of bad influences. However, the following is an example of what may occur: A young girl, just arrived at the age where she cared for good clothes, was a member of a poor family. She saw several moving pictures representing girls particularly smartly attired. Visualizing these girls, and imagining herself well dressed became an habitual part of her daily life; she gave herself up to day dreaming, which gradually became more and more vivid. She had opportunities to help herself to some articles of dress in shops where she went, and she did so largely, it seems, under the influence of these pictures. We noted with interest that she stated that it was during certain periods of idleness and waiting, particularly in these shops, that the pictures came up in her mind.

Stealing a Habit in Itself.—In not a few cases we have been met, by way of explanation, with the statement from the delinquent that the misconduct was due to "my habit of stealing." In many instances of children, who are rather unintelligent, it would be difficult to know just what the basis of the habit is, but it seems clear that once having stolen, an impulse toward the same form of delinquency readily recurs through any one of a number of given channels. The individual comes to look upon himself as one who on occasion may be a thief. It is the old story of the trodden path being easy to follow. The combating of this conception of the self may require alteration of any one of a number of factors, according to the given case. It may not be clear that the habitual idea of stealing is due to mental pictures or to recurrent self-initiated thought processes, and yet the total result is largely the outcome of habit. The sight of the grocery store from which eatables have previously been taken, the whistle of a comrade with whom stealing has been carried on may form the stimulus that starts up impulses along habit-worn paths of mental life and conduct.

B. Physical Habits

It would be very difficult to make a line of demarcation between mental and physical habits—the latter embody so many psychological features—but for convenience' sake we may group those habits

that are largely based on what we call physical sensation. Of course, these might very properly be entitled psychophysical habits. The connection of such habits with stealing is only indirect, but nevertheless may be causally very important. The given habit may be a large factor in causing delinquency.

Use of Alcohol.—For our readers, fortunately, we need take little space in discussing the use of alcohol among American children; it is rare. The relation of alcohol drinking to misconduct is not observable to any extent in males in this country until about seventeen years of age. Very occasionally we have known of a group of boys drinking together, perhaps in barns, and there concocting half-drunken schemes for adventure and plunder. As a result there may ensue street robbery and even burglary. It is astonishing how reckless a young adolescent may become under the influence of even small quantities of intoxicating drinks. The immaturity of the nervous system at this age brings about an excessive amount of response to many poisons, especially alcohol. The normal moral inhibitions under such circumstances are easily broken down and delinquency results as a matter of course. The facts of the general relationship between crime and drinking are fairly well known, but they have never yet been emphasized enough, nor have the more accurate scientific and social aspects of this causal relationship ever been strongly enough brought out. When it comes to the question of drinking among juveniles,

we feel certain that adolescents should never be allowed even beer drinking. The moral risk is too great.

Bad Sex Habits.—It is of course clear that we can not here, with the freedom of a physiological treatise, discuss the various sex habits, indulgence in which frequently undermines the will to do right, but we should in no uncertain terms call attention to this very striking fact, the knowledge of which has been brought to our attention over and over again. Nothing is surer in our experience than that one of the greatest causes of delinquency, including stealing, is secret sex practises. Many judges of wide experience with delinquents have become persuaded of the correlation and have frequently commented thereon. In what way may stealing be apparently so indirectly caused?

(a) By actual physical depletion, so that the functions of the nervous system are below par. An abnormally weak individual is produced, one who may be easily influenced by others, or by various sorts of impersonal temptations to stealing. Not only is the conscious will power lowered, but the usual mental checks and restraints which in the child cause him to refrain from stealing are not present in full force. As psychologists say, inhibitions are weakened.

(b) Through mental lassitude there may not be the normal interest in ordinary childhood activities that keep the mind occupied. A full mind is the

greatest safeguard against juvenile delinquency. If there are not the usual incentives from youthful energy to engage in strenuous activities, a path of less resistance may turn in the direction of such conduct as stealing.

(c) We have found, very commonly, that with a moderate amount of depletion and lassitude from bad sex habits, stimulants of various kinds are demanded. When there is no longer pleasure in the more vigorous and healthy pursuits of boyhood, and girlhood, too, for that matter, peculiarly stimulating amusements and methods of passing away the time are sought. It is then that the child may have to steal in order to satisfy his excessive craving for picture shows, cheap theatrical entertainments, smoking and even excessive candy eating. It has been surprising to find, even among very young delinquents, how frequently this chain of causation obtains.

(d) There is often a peculiar effect on the whole personal morale through indulgence in clandestine sex habits. It seems sometimes as if a sort of contamination spreads over the whole realm of conduct and causes the individual, secretly engaged in something that is felt to be wrong, to indulge in other delinquencies. The mechanisms of this moral contagion are not altogether clear, but experience makes one stoutly affirm that many a case of stealing in young children is not to be adequately met without appreciating and understandingly dealing with

the sex problems that are confronting the young individual and causing him secretly to feel himself to be a delinquent.

(e) Very frequently where companions, a couple or a crowd, have been stealing together it has been discovered that the real bond of union between them is not the predatory spirit, but is their common knowledge of illicit sex affairs, and perhaps their indulgence, either together or under mutual stimulation, in bad sex practises. Many a parent, or other observer, has wondered why, in spite of admonitions and punishments, a certain gang has not been broken up, or the hold of certain companions has not been relinquished, when, as a matter of fact, the real issue in such affairs as are mentioned above, has been altogether unobserved.

The upshot of all these remarks on bad sex habits leads us to say with emphasis that in all cases of delinquency among children there should be a highly sympathetic inquiry made by the parents, or others interested, into the possibilities of abnormal sex life causing a trend toward delinquency. One must resist morbidness in this direction and avoid exaggeration of the facts, but it remains true that, since the therapeutist should always be a student of causes, it is advisable to explore thoroughly for this type of cause.

Treatment.—The treatment of bad sex habits in children is a matter to be taken up with the medical adviser and particularly the medicopsychologist.

This is no place to discuss the details, but in general it may be said that in some instances physical conditions are at fault and may be remedied, while in the majority of cases it is undoubtedly the mental life itself that must be changed. Aid in accomplishing the latter is to be derived from intimate knowledge of persons, places and details of the mental content concerned in the temptation.

Use of Tobacco.—In the discussion of how the use of tobacco in children may be related to stealing, we can call attention to the type of indirect causation referred to in the paragraphs immediately preceding. Of course, smoking never does directly cause stealing, but it may be a concomitant and a partially causative phenomenon. The child may so run himself down by its use that through a weakened nervous system there is less resistance to many kinds of temptations, including social ones, such as thieving with others. Stealing, too, may be necessary in order to obtain the tobacco, and one must not forget the point we made above, namely, that when any habit is secretly indulged in there is easily developed a tendency to delinquent behavior along other lines. This is true of the individual and of the group. The little crowd that gathers for the sake of smoking may find it very easy to engage in group stealing.

Physical Treatment.—The treatment of tobacco smoking (occasionally chewing) on the part of a child presents much less difficulty on the physi-

cal side than it does from the social standpoint. The child can not have had a habit so deeply formed that it is to be regarded as impossible to break up. Of course, another side has to be considered, for in some cases the condition of the body, and especially of the nervous system, may be so defective that the individual has not normal amount of will power to bring to the attack on the habit. If this be the case, then such defective conditions should be diagnosed and remedied if possible. To conquer a habit, full bodily strength, on which good will power is largely based, may be demanded. There is little except this to be said about the treatment of smoking. Various nostrums have been advertised as being peculiarly efficacious in killing the desire for smoking; various mouth washes have been advocated which give a distaste for tobacco. The latter may give a turn in the right direction, but there is nothing permanent about it. Unless the underlying psychophysical conditions, the foundations on which the use of tobacco have been developed, are met, there is going to be no lasting break in the habit. There is no danger from stopping the use of tobacco; one can proceed at any time to the essentials, namely, the building up of will power and taking away temptation. But for the two latter points other considerations have to be taken into account.

Altogether, we see no reason whatever for anything else than complete prevention of smoking by children. We have no patience with the mother

who bought her boy a pipe in order that he might not use cigarettes. It is not our business here to make a war on the use of tobacco by men, but we can at least insist that a child be taught the essential fact, that the use of tobacco is thoroughly pernicious during the stages of growth and should not be indulged in at all. Advising anything short of this dictum is weakness.

Social Treatment.—There are definite psychological and social considerations connected with the use of tobacco. The latter are the easiest to understand. Smoking is largely, after all, a social affair and it is always begun through imitation. Indeed the individual has often to struggle hard through a series of unpleasant experiences before he is able to overcome natural distastes. One can not get away from the fact that perhaps the most effective general treatment would be for elders to change their own habits. Then there might be some chance of the boy being kept away from companions who smoke. We have no sympathy for the father who fills his house with tobacco smoke and then feels aggrieved because his boys early develop a taste for the weed. Of course there are differences in tastes and cravings and some children once having had experience with tobacco feel a demand for it quite apart from any social considerations. But generally this is not the case. Then the psychological considerations are, in part at least, social, too. There are not only certain rather pleasurable sensations, but there is also

satisfaction in the consciousness that one is approaching manhood, or even that one dares to be and to do what is proscribed. The daring of it, as we may see in the case of girls' smoking, is no small item in the pleasure afforded.

Use of Drugs.—In mentioning drugs, we are very glad to be able to say that, as with alcohol, the use of these is rarely found to be a causative factor in stealing by children. Occasional cases are met with where the use of cocaine, or some derivative of opium, by a child is so completely upsetting to the moral side that stealing is a natural outcome. But instances of the sort are far rarer, we find in our years of experience, than newspaper accounts would lead us to believe.

Overuse of Tea and Coffee.—It is well worth noting that the overuse of tea and coffee by children is distinctly conducive to delinquency. Some parents are all too ignorant and neglectful of this fact, of which we have found greater evidence than we have of the connection of the use of tobacco with stealing. Let us discuss the matter in this way: It is a well-known principle in pharmacology that the effect of drugs is, in a general way, proportionate to the size or weight of the individual. If the adult will remember the effect of tea or coffee on himself and will then multiply this in proportion to the body or weight of the child, he will have some conception of the possible nervous influence that these beverages may exert. Not only this, but one should

also take into account the fact that nerve cells in young beings are in a much more excitable condition than at a later stage, and are undoubtedly much more influenceable by just such stimulants as tea and coffee. We are not at all sure but that of all the habits we have found related to delinquency in children there is more evidence of excessive use of tea and coffee being at fault than any other. In studying this effect, as in the case of tobacco or drugs, physical findings are usually present. It is not difficult to recognize the hyper-excitability of the nervous system.

When giving illustrations of cases one finds, here as elsewhere, a number of different factors uniting to give the result. In particular, the excessive use of tea and coffee is frequently the result of bad family oversight, which influences toward delinquency in many directions. We find a boy, for instance, whose mother is insane and in an institution, and who has been left largely to his own devices at home after his father has prepared breakfast and left for his daily work, is an excessive user of coffee. The boy has developed a desire for it and keeps it brewing all day long. We find him a restless, nervous little fellow who dislikes school, and who steals to get money for his nervously desired, illicit enjoyments. But sometimes the stimulants are allowed out of sheer carelessness, the parents not realizing what harm may be done. I have heard a

mother say in an offhand way that her delinquent child was like a drunkard in taking tea and coffee. There is no need of giving further illustrations, but we may add that we have seen numerous instances where a child of eighty or ninety pounds was indulging in ten or twelve cups of tea a day, or of half as many cups of coffee.

Bad Habits vs. Efficiency of Nervous System.—Looking over the points made above it may be seen that the general bearing of them is to show that defective conditions of the nervous system produced by bad habits tend toward the production of delinquency. No one could go so far as to say that other bodily imperfections are at all directly correlated with such an offense as stealing, but when the functions of the central nervous system are disordered there ensues several reasons why delinquency may partially result. The efficiency of the human individual, as I have often maintained, is largely to be gaged in terms of integrity of the nerve cells and of nerve conduction apparatus. This efficiency to some extent includes the basis for good moral tone. The imperfectly functioning nervous system gives abnormal opportunities for the activity of unusual desires and impulses. On the other hand, healthy impulses and interests which should have full possession of the child's life, are not nearly so possible when nerve centers are not up to par. Moreover, the point has been easily perceived time and time

again that resistance to suggestion is bound to be much lower than it should be when this controlling part of the physical organism is not in good order.

C. Social Habits

As the result of experience I am constrained to throw great emphasis on social habits when considering the possibility of doing anything about a case of stealing, whether by a grown person or a child. We have had it borne in on us many times that there is little hope for the individual if his environmental conditions are not changed, simply because he otherwise will continue to be a victim of social habits already formed. The individual need not be particularly weak in order to be a victim of social habit, even to the extent of involving delinquent tendencies. Indeed, it would take an extraordinarily strong character to stand up against many unfortunate, besetting, environmental conditions tending to habit formation.

Crowd Habits.—There are a thousand and one detailed circumstances that might be enumerated in considering social habits, but the following types of facts will sufficiently bring out our main point. Every case, however, will have to be studied for its own peculiar problems. For many boys the going with a crowd or gang is a social habit that is firmly fixed. Let such a member of a crowd be out on the streets by himself and he is like a fish out of water. Out of school hours his life, when he is not with

his friends, is most unsettled and unsatisfactory. When the actual call of the crowd comes there enters social suggestion, which is a different matter, but the call of habit in the individual is strong in itself. We have heard this hundreds of times if we have heard it once, namely, that stealing was never done except under the individual's habitual social reactions in company with others. Let a boy live in a neighborhood where the boys go upon the railroad tracks to steal, as they do in cities; it may be desperately hard to break up this habit, as many a city policeman knows. Since these boys have done this thing together before, and it has afforded the crowd exhilaration and adventure, whenever they come together, just from habit, their thought turns to the old scene of exploits. The pertinacity of such a habit, even after warnings of many kinds is astonishing. The small boy was asked why he was willing to risk injury and arrest; "Well, when we get together we always talk about the railroad tracks and we always think we are going up there and get something." There may be plenty of other adventures within a mile or so, but no, they have committed this delinquency before, and just because of this their inclination is to do it again.

Some Details of Social Habits.—The mere breaking up of habitual companionship is not always sufficient to conquer stealing tendencies. The individual may have cultivated such inclinations for crowd misconduct that he soon picks up with the

same kind of companions in another neighborhood. Not very rarely is this the case and it should be guarded against. A certain type of habitual crowd behavior is shown in the attraction that little gangs, mostly boys, but sometimes girls, find for certain kinds of stores. This does not obtain much in small towns, but in city life it is important, as any store detective will tell.

Habitual Idea of Stealing from a Certain Shop.—A child who frequents a certain shop forms habitual reactions regarding the place. If his ideas center on stealing, and particularly if stealing has ever been successfully indulged in there, the chances are that he will come back and back to that particular store or to another one of the same type. The stealing may not be indulged in at every visit; opportunity is not always afforded. Department stores in the poorer districts, where people send their children to trade, are particularly apt to lose by this type of stealing. A child who has stolen once there is always on the lookout for another chance, and there are many objects of temptation in such a place. On our records may be found accounts of little school boys and girls who have stolen scores of articles from such shops. This type of stealing should be easy enough to prevent, and would be, were there proper parental care of the children.

Habits Developed in Shops, etc., Which Children Frequent.—The call of social habit under certain circumstances is stronger than any child is

likely to withstand. A group of children get into the habit of going into a candy shop near a school house, apparently an innocent place, but they may be allowed to cultivate thoroughly bad habits there. The dash and excitement of spending money may lead to stealing from home and elsewhere. In some places a temptation is miserable little gambling devices. Still worse are the social habits engendered in pool rooms, but very fortunately these are controlled under special ordinances in large cities, so that children are not allowed therein, any more than in saloons. The shops in which children spend small sums of money are sometimes run by immoral people. Many such instances have come to our notice and places of this kind have been even conducted as "fences," the woman shop-keeper inciting the children to steal and buying stolen goods from them. Attendance at these places establishes a habit that is hard to break. The little offender may half realize his danger, but yet going down the street finds it fairly impossible to go by the place without going in. The path is trodden right through that doorway; almost involuntarily the footsteps lead there. Places of any kind that children frequent, including apparently harmless penny candy stores, should be thoroughly investigated as a general social measure.

Other points of import pertaining to social habits are considered in our chapter on Amusements and Adventure and elsewhere in this volume.

CHAPTER VIII

PHYSICAL CONDITIONS

SOME forms of delinquency are, naturally, much more related to physical conditions than is stealing. Indeed, it is not common to find any physical trouble in children that can be reckoned a major cause for theft. However, physical diseases and disabilities in a wide range are found to be incidentally correlated with thieving and to be contributing factors. We might enumerate many of these physical abnormalities. First among them, and easiest to appreciate the effects of, are those bodily conditions that bring about failures, dissatisfactions and irritations in school life, and lead to truancy and its consequent bad companionship. We might mention defective vision, for instance. Here is a boy with poor eyesight who has never enjoyed his work in the schoolroom. With a great sense of relief he stays out, and the enticements of street life thereupon become many. He has no money, and as a natural consequence may get into petty thieving.

Conditions Causing School Dissatisfactions of the Truant-Thief.—It is hardly necessary to go through the list of ailments which may cause dis-

satisfaction with the closed-in life of the ordinary schoolroom. We have found anemia, general poor conditions of nourishment and development, defective hearing, and many other ailments responsible for this social and educational misfortune. Much has been made of diseased conditions of the nose and throat, and no doubt they are important. A child who is a mouth breather and who has large adenoids is quite apt to do poorly on the work that other children perform with ease. This leads to the irritations and consequences we have just mentioned. Many local conditions tend to produce the same outcome—none of them, however, would one lay special stress on as cause for stealing, although in every case they should conscientiously be sought for. The truant-thief presents a problem that is best studied under the head of truancy; the stealing is secondary.

Over- and Premature Development.—Some physical conditions that are not nearly well enough understood as causative of delinquency belong in the categories of over-development and premature development. If a child is possessed of a superabundance of energy and lives in an environment that can not provide material proportionate to his needs, the reaction may be delinquency. We studied a boy of fourteen years, who was six feet in height and astonishingly well developed otherwise. He was already a head taller than any other member of his family. They lived in a cooped-up city apartment.

His career serves as a text for one phase of our discussion; we have seen many others who present the same characteristics. Some of the earliest of this boy's impulses were toward adventure, and after dark he found the greatest chances for leading his wild life. Under his social circumstances there can be little wonder that he began thieving—it is of interest to know that he frequently stole such material as would serve him for further adventure. For a long time he collected his plunder in hidden places, and as a last adventure stole a neighbor's horse and made off into the country with it, to begin a long journey toward the West. After we pointed out the essentials of the case, fortunately the father had discernment enough to realize them, and though the boy had not finished his school life, he gave him on a western ranch the opportunities that his nature imperatively craved.

Physiological Restlessness.—To the ardent restlessness of boyhood, and sometimes of girlhood, can be attributed not a few cases of stealing. Physiological phenomena are at the base of this. Often the so-called nervousness is nothing more or less than a developmental affair. General over-size, as in the above case, is by no means always present, but the effect may be caused by such a factor as premature puberty. Over and over we have seen cases of this kind where, particularly in boys, the forwardness of physiological conditions was responsible for their not acting as their fellows of the same age;

the outcome has been that illicit adventures and satisfactions were sought. In such cases a great deal of care is needed; less, however, on account of stealing than because of other delinquencies. A free country life with plenty of opportunity for physical exercise and normal adventure is highly desirable.

Exclusion from the Schoolroom.—Every student of delinquency in children well knows the moral complications that are caused through a child suffering from physical conditions which do not thoroughly disable him, but which prevent attendance at school. For instance, victims of chorea (St. Vitus' dance), quite apart from the mental manifestations which sometimes accompany that disease, are prone to get into trouble on account of stealing when they are not allowed in the schoolroom. Or the child as the result of some mildly contagious disorder, such as ringworm, or tuberculosis, is subject to the same social temptations. Sometimes defective control of the bladder makes a child undesirable in school, much to the shame of the afflicted one. In several cases we have known this trouble to cause street life in lieu of school attendance, with consequent stealing.

Psychophysical Conditions.—When it comes to discussion of physical conditions that affect mentality, this subject is best treated under the head of abnormal mental conditions. The prime consideration for the student of delinquency is the mental condition itself. The nervous diseases, epilepsy and

chorea, and severe head injuries that so notoriously cause instability of mind and character, also belong in the chapter on Abnormal Mentality Correlated with Stealing. There are other border-line cases in which it is hard to say whether the physical manifestations or mental conditions are the more important as correlated to delinquency—I speak particularly of the neurotic types. In these we practically always find several factors making for the production of bad behavior—there may be irritation at home through the presence of a nervous parent; there is apt to be over-use of such stimulants as tea and coffee, and so on. The nervous child is no more likely than any one else to steal, except as he may be urged in the direction of delinquency by factors that overcome his often imperfect powers of resistance.

Physical Conditions Causing Anti-Social Attitude.—We must not forget that defective physical conditions may definitely cause anti-social attitudes. We all know this by observation of beggars and vagrant types. The deficient individual may early come, with more or less deliberation, to the conclusion that society owes him a living and that he is justified in getting it in any way he can. This is clearly expressed sometimes even in childhood. We have known quite a number of other instances in which direct advantage was taken of an ailment in order to carry out delinquencies that were pre-

meditated and enjoyed in a way that ordinary pleasures and routine school work could not be.

Case of the Above Type.—The case of one boy I have long known has always been a difficult problem. Following an attack of rheumatism, he has a bad heart lesion, which has always led his family and the school physicians to feel that he ought not to be burdened heavily with work. As the result of this, and of the negative family attitude, which amounted simply to their feeling that they must favor him and do nothing more about the matter, he always had much spare time on his hands. Notwithstanding his disease, he is, as frequently such cases are, an alert and active type. He has good mentality and for a short spurt can exert himself physically without bad consequences. This boy became the virtual leader, and perhaps trainer, of a gang of little thieves. In some way he learned many of the tricks and arts of older misdoers, and through his skill it was long before the practises of himself and his gang were discovered. On some of their predatory excursions he performed part of the more skilful work while they did the heavy labor under his direction. Well planned burglaries were committed in this way; hours being chosen when these young boys might be away from their homes without suspicion.

Physical Conditions That Weaken Will.—Quite in contrast to the class of ailments just de-

scribed we may consider unfortunate physical states through which the will is weakened and the individual becomes an easy prey to temptation from within or without. We have spoken somewhat of this matter in our chapter on Habits. The main source of those physical conditions that bring about a weakened will, and lead to stealing, is pernicious sex habits. Considerations of the same sort apply to any other cause of physical depletion; we can include the wasting of any chronic disease, and particularly the results of poor hygiene. The boy who starts out in the morning after having spent a night breathing air deficient in oxygen, for example, is much more prone to be a victim of temptations, to be easily led by bad companions, than is the individual who is in possession of full physical and mental strength. We by no means want to urge the conclusion, however, that the majority of delinquents are suffering from atrociously bad physical conditions. Indeed, we observe that among children it is very often the most active ones who engage in certain forms of stealing. But in this matter, as elsewhere, there are many varieties of individuals, of factors and temptations. Physical weakness may be a source of trouble and must be reckoned with.

Importance of Treatment of Physical Conditions.—In summary, we may state that delinquent children should be studied from the physical standpoint, in the first place to ascertain whether

any physical conditions and peculiarities are causative of the delinquent tendencies. We are not going to find an excessive proportion of these, but such as are found may prove very important. In the second place, it is hard enough for the child with quite normal moral tendencies to get along under bad physical conditions, while it is much harder for delinquents to make good in such circumstances. Lest one may say, in this connection, as is often said, that delinquents are having too much done for them nowadays, that they are receiving too much study and attention, one might answer that society has a great deal at stake in the welfare of individuals who show a tendency to prey on it. Whatever can be done to check their tendencies should be done in full measure and at the very earliest opportunity. If physical conditions are in any way at fault they, if possible, should be remedied.

CHAPTER IX

ABNORMAL MENTALITY CORRELATED WITH STEALING

UNDER the head of abnormal mentality we propose here to outline non-technically those deficiencies in mental powers and those aberrational types of mental functioning that are to be regarded in some individuals as partial causes of the delinquency, stealing. We would at once make it understood that in this chapter we do not include discussion of what there may be in the mental content, or what may have influenced the mind by way of experience, which has led to delinquency. We shall discuss these elsewhere; particularly will they be dealt with in the chapter on Impulsions and Obsessions. Under the term abnormal we include all undesirable deviations from the normal, whether they be of the nature of original defect or absence of functioning ability, or whether they imply perverted function, as in the case of mental disturbance or mental disease.

Proportion of Defectives Among Delinquents.—Much is made nowadays of the relationship between mental defect and delinquency. It is very properly a highly important social consideration and

we would never minimize the urgent need there is for general education on this point, although we must confess to a lack of sympathy with the highly-colored statements and immaturely considered statistics that have been in the last few years placed before the public. The realities of the situation are bad enough; there is no need of any propaganda by exaggerations. Our own long experience has shown that specially gathered statistics by no means tell a true story concerning the proportion of defectives among delinquents. It has been almost a daily experience with us to see the defective caught after perpetrating a trivial offense, or even while attempting it (not but that he sometimes commits a bad crime), while the brighter offender succeeds often in evading arrest during a career of many delinquencies. The population of any institution for offenders represents only those who have been caught and, as far as juveniles are concerned, institutional inmates are nearly always those who were found not to succeed on probation. Very naturally, especially with girls, the defectives are just the ones who can not be trusted without institutional restraint, and so statistics taken from institutional sources are very far from representing the true facts concerning delinquency. By far the most careful study of the proportionate number of mental defectives among delinquents has been made by Doctor Augusta F. Bronner of the Juvenile Court, of Chicago. She took five hundred quite unselected cases

of juvenile offenders as they were brought to the Juvenile Detention Home and found that in certainly not more than ten per cent. of the cases could the children be denominated mentally defective.

Importance of Environment of Mental Defectives.—If one undertakes any careful study of the causation of delinquency, even when the mentality of the delinquent is clearly abnormal, it will be found that environmental factors must always be taken into account. This is most fortunate, after all, because it points out the avenue to effective treatment. Concerning stealing, it should be perfectly clear that opportunities afforded and experiences passed through have even more to do with the commission of offense by a defective than in the case of a normal individual, who possesses more initiative and makes to a greater extent his own opportunities. On the farm or in the small town the feeble-minded boy or girl is rarely known as an offender, but the same individual in a tenement district and where hundreds of shops afford many chances, readily develops a habit of stealing. The same is true to a less extent of the aberrational types, where the individual is not so much defective as unable to control his mental processes in a normal way. With the mentally abnormal, then, the opportunities afforded by their environment may be considered a large factor in the production of delinquency. It is from this common-sense standpoint that treatment is to be considered. If the mentality can not

be brought up to normal, as it never can be in the case of a really defective type, then another of the factors causing delinquency in these cases, namely environment, is to be thought of as the principal alterable condition.

Need for Definitions.—In this discussion, addressed to non-professional readers, it is absolutely essential that we have a clear meaning of terms used. Fortunately, definitions can be given without appeal to technical language. Indeed, there is no reason why the general phases of the whole subject, especially of mental defect, should not be a part of popular knowledge. Through failure of the law, and even of medical men not especially concerned with mental defectives, to keep abreast of recent developments in this field, there is great and unnecessary confusion of terminology. We propose here to follow the ideas of the two foremost bodies of scientific men who have dealt with this problem, namely, the American Association for the Study of the Feeble-minded, and the British Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-minded.

Basis of Definitions.—The British Commission made its long survey of the subject before the important idea of graduated mental tests was fairly before the students of mental defect, but, nevertheless, this investigating and deliberative body developed a point of view, namely, that of the social characteristics and abilities of defectives, which can never fairly be neglected. The American Associa-

tion during its long existence had dealt with the whole problem almost entirely from medical aspects until about five years ago, when much more practical considerations won the day. It was then seen that the understanding and classification of defectives, since their organic brain defects are never curable, could best be thought of in terms of their psychological qualifications and their educational capabilities. As it stands now, any adequate diagnosis of the nature and possibilities of a mentally defective individual must include medical, social and educational features, and to a large extent the two latter can best be determined by the giving of mental tests.

Terminology.—Under an old terminology any mentally defective individual was designated an imbecile. We have quite outgrown this application of the word and also of the term idiot, which, however, is still often retained in legal usage as meaning a feeble-minded person of any grade. The best classification to hold to is that of the American system, which offers the term feeble-minded as a generic title and under it places three grades, namely, the moron, or upper grade, the imbecile, or middle grade, and the idiot, or lowest grade. Considering how impossible it is to draw a sharp line of demarcation between normal and abnormal types, I always insist that the best way to approach logically the general subject is to speak of mental defectives, freely acknowledging that all persons may have mental defects along special lines. Then we can

safely use the terminology of the American Association, remembering another highly important fact, particularly for students of delinquency, namely, that there is a group that lies between the morons and the fully adult type of mind. Perhaps we can best speak of this class as those who are subnormal in mental ability.

Definitions.—We now come to the point of actual definitions, and these we can discuss briefly. As I said above, the British Commission afforded us a very useful point of view when it insisted on social qualifications as a point of departure for definition. Difficult though exact determinations of the types may be by their scheme, yet the idea of it is fundamental, for, after all, defect and aberration are ultimately nothing more or less than social disqualifications. This Commission stated that in studying mental defectives they were concerned with those individuals where there "was a state of mental defect from birth, or from an early age, due to incomplete cerebral development, in consequence of which the person affected is unable to perform duties as a member of society in the position of life to which he was born." They also went on to define the three types, the highest of which (corresponding to our class of morons) is "one who is capable of earning a living under favorable circumstances, but who is incapable, from mental defect existing from birth, or from an early age, (a) of competing on equal terms with his normal fel-

lows; or (b) of managing himself and his affairs with ordinary prudence." The middle grade, or imbecile, is defined as "one who, by reason of mental defect existing from birth, or from early age, is incapable of earning his own living, but is capable of guarding himself against common physical dangers." The lowest grade, or idiot, is given as "a person so deeply defective in mind from birth, or from early age, that he is unable to guard himself against common physical dangers."

Classification by Tests.—The American Association has never denied the value of the above point of view, but has been most desirous for the sake of institutional classification and better diagnosis before admission to institutions of getting a standard of definition which could be applied without the long observation that the British scheme implies. To this end they have employed the Binet system of tests, which although it is far from perfect, affords at the present time the best graduated scale of intelligence that is applicable without a prolonged study of the individual. This scale, it may at once be said, is to be fairly employed merely as a scheme for preliminary diagnosis, and like many other useful ideas, has been given exaggerated importance, as if by it one were capable of measuring all the vast intricacies and possibilities of the human mind, defective and normal. The plan of the American Association is to designate as the upper grade feeble-minded or morons those who are fifteen

years or more in age and yet can only pass the Binet tests that are normally done by children seven to twelve years of age. The imbeciles are those who pass the tests of normal children from three to seven years old, and the idiots are those who go below this. In the study of children younger than fifteen years one can use this same scale for estimating mental ability on a basis of retardation, and the individual is usually considered feeble-minded if there are three or four years of backwardness, even though one can not say to what extent through education there may be improvement. It must be extremely rare that a child thus backward by these tests ever ultimately proves normal, because the tests, particularly for the younger years, are largely based on native abilities to pick up information from ordinary world experiences. Many of the tests depend comparatively little on educational opportunities. (It should go without saying that in the case of physical ailments that may cause inability to learn by ordinary methods or to answer the tests in the usual way the tests must be ruled out, otherwise even a deaf and dumb person, for instance, who had not learned to communicate, might be falsely judged.)

Causation of Mental Defect.—This present work is not the place to discuss scientifically the problems of causation of feeble-mindedness, but a few words on this topic are pertinent to our practical aim. School-teachers and other social workers

constantly find remarkable evidences of inferior home conditions, defective physiological development, alcoholism on the part of the parents, family diseases and clearly defective heredity correlated with mental defect in the child. The facts are so plain that scientific investigation is not necessary to make them clear. When one, however, endeavors to trace back to a single factor the causation of the mental defect, there may be great difficulty, and indeed this may prove impossible. The alcoholic parent is frequently defective, the child who has suffered severely from a brain disease during infancy may previously to this have shown signs of congenital defect. Exceedingly bad home conditions are often the result of parental incompetency. Notwithstanding the stress that is laid just now on eugenics, particularly on the possible results of bad heredity, we find in the actual field of investigation that many defectives are undoubtedly such because of improper ante-natal conditions and other developmental abnormalities, such as infantile disease that affected the brain cells and caused arrest of mental development.

Causation of Delinquency in Defectives.—In studying the causation of delinquency in a mental defective, instead of the causation of feeble-mindedness, we are brought to a more complex situation. Here was a boy of eleven, for instance, who was brought to us because he was a chronic thief at his school and in the neighborhood. He was a feeble-

minded boy, ranging seven years according to the Binet tests, a sufferer from congenital syphilis. His father was excessively alcoholic, and the home affairs were, naturally, atrocious. Any one of the four conditions, a drinking father, his own mental defect, exceedingly bad physical conditions, or a miserable home, might in itself have been sufficient to turn him toward delinquency. There is no chance in such a case for blaming the trouble on any one selected fact.

In another case reported to us because of stealing at the tender age of six years, we found the boy to be already two years retarded mentally, and we obtained information showing that the family themselves either directly taught him to steal, or at least connived at his doing so. One of his grandfathers was a great alcoholic and a deserter of his family. The grandmother was known to be a thief. One uncle on the other side was known to be a desperate criminal and another a drug fiend. One can well imagine the bearing that family life in such a circle might have on the development of this little lad's stealing. Among the many possibilities of the case it would be difficult enough to know what caused this boy's mental defect, to say nothing of his delinquency. No doubt a very considerable portion of all feeble-mindedness is the direct result of the inheritance of similar traits, but we must remember that there are also various other causes for mental defect.

Are There Moral Defectives?—On account of certain popular conceptions and usage of terms we must discuss in brief the idea of defect on the moral side alone. I know full well that many deep considerations are involved in a thorough covering of this topic, but after much observation of special cases bearing on this point, and through study of the literature, such as I outline in a chapter in my textbook for professional people, the gist of the matter seems to be the following: When the investigator, with the aid of modern methods of analysis and testing, goes carefully into the case of the offender who is supposed to be defective in his moral nature, one of two or three points always comes out. The delinquent may possibly, through the scientific study, be found to have very definite and important mental disabilities that may not have been suspected previously. Or through untoward environmental experiences, or lack of normal social training, it may perhaps be discovered that what is called the moral nature has not had the chance to be built up in the usual way. We can readily understand, for instance, that the result of a defective neighborhood spirit toward property rights, such as we speak of in our chapter on Companionship, may after years lead to the lack of normal feeling about what is really right and wrong in this respect. We remember that the Spartan youth was brought up to feel that stealing by the use of cunning was praiseworthy and evidence of superior ability. Or, thirdly, the

individual may exhibit chronically an attitude of lack of normal social appreciations as the result of certain conscious or even subconscious mental struggles or conflicts that are going on in him, all unbeknown to the world outside. If we investigate the case, using these three standpoints of analysis, we shall find very little occasion for consideration of "defect in the moral sense." The reader should be acquainted with the fact, also, that careful students of psychology and ethics conclude that there is no such separate faculty as that of a special moral sense. We know very well that our ethical conceptions and our behavior-tendencies are gradually evolved as portions of our social consciousness.

Why Delinquency Among Defectives?—Notwithstanding a general idea which is abroad nowadays, that it is explanation enough for a mentally defective individual being a delinquent because he is a mental defective, I challenge the satisfactoriness of this explanation, not only for the sake of scientific knowledge, but also for the attitude of parents and teachers toward the mentally defective individuals with whom they deal. One would not feel this point so strongly if one were not acquainted with clearly feeble-minded individuals whose notions of right and wrong are quite as well fixed, perhaps, as those of most normal individuals. To assert, for instance, that any mentally defective boy or girl is likely to steal if sent down-town alone is ridiculous. Many of them can be safely entrusted

even with money. The problem, once more, demands high individualization; the question is always whether this particular defective individual is subject to thieving impulses and whether he lacks the power to resist temptation offered through environmental opportunity. Technically, one discusses his powers of inhibition. All of us, and particularly children, have to use inhibitions to make us socially desirable persons. The mentally defective more frequently than the normal person lacks the ability to fortify himself against impulses or temptations that arise from within or without. It is not then simply because he is mentally defective that the defective individual becomes a delinquent, but because on the average, more than others, he is lacking in certain powers of self-control that are necessary for normal social adjustments.

Mental Habit Among Defectives.—Going farther with this same point, we may speak of habit formation among mental defectives. Just as the defective person is commonly less capable of controlling his impulses than the normal person, so he is more under the sway of that important psychological phenomenon which we call habit. The fundamental laws of mental life are quite the same for the defective and even the insane as they are for the normal. The stream of mental life goes along by virtue of one mental process following upon another, whether the process be under good control or not. The formation and utilization of habit,

which always goes on, even along beneficent lines, as James so splendidly points out, is found probably more among abnormal than in normal individuals. It has often been pointed out by students of defective vagrant and workhouse types that there are specializations in the forms of their delinquencies. One individual most foolishly steals only shoes, another, overcoats, and another, fowls, and so on. Even in childhood, before habits are so well set, one sees indication of this. A couple of days ago I studied a feeble-minded colored boy who had never stolen, as far as I could ascertain, anything but articles from wagons on the street, but he had repeatedly done this, although he had been chased and caught on several occasions. It seemed clear that a loaded wagon coming by on the street aroused a chain of association processes, a set of ideas, which developed an impulse that he had not, defective as he was, normal power to control. It had already reached the point that when drivers in the district complained, people would suggest this boy as the thief.

Special Abilities of Defectives.—In several cases of stealing by defective children we curiously have been able to trace the tendency to offense to some particular ability the offender possessed all out of proportion to his general mental disabilities. The explanation of this sometimes seems to be the following: The individual has received very little satisfaction as the result of his efforts, either

in school or elsewhere. In the course of exploring the world, as it were, for satisfaction of such activities as represent his best powers, he finds that he can steal or get into a house without being caught. In this he is achieving success that he has not met with elsewhere. Acknowledging that it is the exercise of a low form of cunning, we may yet have common sense to see that it is one of the boy's few possible modes of exercising his strongest abilities. However, the capability displayed in the delinquency may represent, as in the case of one mechanically inclined defective boy whom we have long known, and who became a moderately successful burglar, capacities that can be recognized as desirable in ordinary occupations. Pursuing this line of thought, we remember a number of subnormal boys who have really taken a great delight in showing themselves to be shrewd little sneak thieves. Some of these were accustomed to make good "hauls" from department stores. So the delinquency of defectives is by no means always the result of lack of exercise of their faculties; it is sometimes the result of use of just their comparatively higher powers.

Peculiarities of Stealing by Defectives.—The question is sometimes asked whether any peculiar type of stealing is to be attributed to defectives. We can at once answer this in the negative, especially when we are considering children. It is very rare that children enter into any deeply planned thieving, such as is represented by embezzlement and forgery

and swindling, so that the usual type of delinquency seen among children is quite open even to the limited abilities of a high-grade feeble-minded child. There are almost no criteria by which one could say that this or that theft must be the act of a mentally defective individual. Indeed, some of the most blundering and stupid performances in the way of stealing that we have known, have been perpetrated under adolescent or other impulses of quite bright children. Since this is the case, there seems little occasion for us to give illustrations of stealing by defectives. About the comparative ease with which such individuals are caught we need hardly say anything; the facts should be obvious. I am not sure that there is any great distinction to be made between the truth-telling characteristics as shown by the commission of delinquency in defectives as compared with normal individuals. Examples of both lying and candor are to be found among both classes. One would be inclined to say that perhaps the most prominent characteristic of the mentally defective delinquent individual is the lack of foresight, which he demonstrates in his social behavior as well as in psychological tests. There is often repetition of the same old offenses in the same old way, so that detection is easy, and after suspicion or on interrogation there is apt to be, if any defense is offered, a renewal of old types of denials.

Teaching of Delinquency by Defectives.—One of the less known, but important occasional charac-

teristics of the feeble-minded delinquent, is the capacity for leadership. We speak much of the feeble-minded lack of resistance to social suggestion, but often forget that they themselves may become great teachers of wrongdoing. We have had this fact forced on us repeatedly, and have known among defectives some ardent purveyors of the knowledge of delinquency. Perhaps these individuals earlier were merely followers, but later on they achieved leadership by virtue of greater experience and adeptness. Indeed, we have had some very astonishing illustrations where a number of normal children have been drawn into delinquency through one feeble-minded young thief who acted as a center of information and teaching. Let a mentally defective boy or girl be active on the physical side and possess fair powers of speech, and he or she may pass for being normal and, indeed, an interesting personage in the eyes of other children who, from inexperience, do not recognize the mental disabilities. Knowedge of groups of school children has shown how curiously such a situation may evolve.

Walter R. was a little boy of eleven, moron type. He had never been any higher than the second grade. His mother was a very ignorant type from whom we could get little information, except that the boy suffered a very severe injury to his head at five years, the evidences of which were plain in a large scar. Home conditions were much at fault, and there had been little control of the lad. He was a

great truant and vagrant wanderer, accustomed to stealing whenever he could. Perhaps through his adventuresome wandering he was regarded as much of a hero by the little lads in his vicinity. He took great delight in getting them to go with him and inducing them to steal, not only food, but also all sorts of articles from shops and department stores. His was really a vigorous personality, and the power he displayed over other boys of his own age or younger was the source of great annoyance to the parents and the many people who suffered losses.

Joe S., at fifteen, was a vigorous well-built boy, but mentally was a moron of about nine years, according to the Binet scale. He came of a family in which the mother and maternal aunt were epileptic. The father was alcoholic. Out of sixteen pregnancies there had been ten miscarriages or early deaths. On account of the several factors mentioned, the least that could be said was that there was a very poor parental oversight. This boy, by dint of much practise, achieved considerable skill as a young burglar. He often worked alone, but sometimes took other boys with him and instructed them thoroughly in his art. It was not until he had long been in delinquency of this sort that he was brought to the juvenile court.

A colored boy, Albert R., at twelve years was one of the most arrant little thieves of whom we have ever known. He was regarded as a pestiferous resident of the quarter of town in which he lived and,

over a long period, many attempts were made, short of sending him away, to cure his tendency. The father was an invalid, very likely from the same disease which caused the boy's congenital faults of physique and his mental backwardness, which was not less than four years. This lad consistently made successful attempts at teaching others to steal. His mother was a washerwoman who got considerable comfort out of his company and who bitterly fought any attempt to send him away. The boy's determination to lead others astray was perhaps the most marked feature of his delinquency.

We have known instances also of girls, where in a less adventuresome way, but with comparatively as much vigor, achievement of leadership over others in delinquent ways was displayed.

Differences in Moral Tendencies Among Defectives.—How far moral disabilities are surely indicated by the fact of defect in mental ability should be a matter for earnest consideration, prior to making general statements about the social needs for colonizing, or otherwise segregating, all mental defectives, and also prior to passing any social, including legal, judgments on them. Relying again on our long experience, we are not persuaded that there is any standard correlation between mental defect and moral disability. Many elements of world-experience enter in to form the character tendencies of even the feeble-minded individual. Moreover, and strikingly important, is the fact that

mental defectives differ greatly among themselves in regard to the particular mental faculties in which they are below par. It is certain that some abilities have much more to do with powers of moral strength than have others. Estimation of Binet age would by no means bring out the essential facts for discernment of such relationships; hence the fallacy of the notion that all individuals of nine mental years, as estimated by this superficial measuring scale, or of any other age, are to be conceived of as unmoral. Had we space we could give many illustrations of what we mean. We could show that some mental defectives brought up in homes where there was great care for their moral welfare have developed quite moral social attributes. They are to be trusted to respect the property rights of others under any ordinary conditions. Indeed, we have seen some feeble-minded persons with a very well developed sense of honesty.

Causes of Differences.—Differences in mental abilities include many points which can not be discussed here. Prominent among them is the quality that we may call suggestibility. There is distinct variation in this, we find, even by tests, among mental defectives, and suggestibility when unfortunately possessed in high degree is a mental trait that leads with great frequency to such delinquencies as stealing. Concerning the stealing of defective delinquents, it has been of no little interest to us to note that in by far the greater number of

cases the individual has been brought up in an environment where there has been much carelessness about ethical standards. Very frequently, in fact, have we noted that others in the same surroundings who are not defectives are delinquents also. There are many reasons for this, of course, including the well-recognized one that abnormal parents, such as exist in some of these families, make for the production of defective environment as well as defective offspring. We should ever insist that when considering why the defective delinquent is what he is, one must take into account surroundings as well as mental capacities, nurture as well as nature.

Treatment of Defectives for Prevention of Delinquency.—The general treatment of mentally defective children from their earliest years ought to include earnest attention to inculcating all possible feeling and realization of social obligation. Any guardian of such a child should, in all common sense, realize that the chances of its entering into, at least petty thieving, if it is to be allowed free life in the community, are greater than those of the normal child. There is plenty of evidence that good results often follow efforts at moral upbuilding, as we have indicated above. In our chapter on Discipline we have mentioned the favorable outcome that even the administration of ordinary punishment may have in these cases. Nothing is so important for prevention as the oversight of companionship. Although this is not universally true, per-

haps the majority of the feeble-minded are unduly suggestible to ideas offered by others and, unfortunately, only too often are the social suggestions that they receive directed toward wrongdoing. It should never be forgotten that among these unfortunates, as among normal individuals, nothing is so conducive to right doing as wholesome interests and wholesome work. Splendid examples of possible results, when prevention is a cardinal feature of the treatment and where the development of mental and even emotional interests are looked after, are to be seen in the best colonies and schools for the feeble-minded. It is wonderful what a small amount of delinquency is encountered in these institutions.

Importance of Treatment of Defective Delinquents.—When once a defective child, for any reason whatever, shows delinquent tendencies, the proper handling of the case is very important for the individual, for the family and for society. The proof of this is found in the fact that such children left to themselves, or temporized with, or treated by the methods applicable to normal offenders, are very likely to become typical recidivists, or repeated offenders. We all now realize that an astonishing percentage of older petty thieves, as met with in courts and institutions for adults, are defectives who have been pursuing their careers of delinquency since childhood. We must insist, also, not only on the harm that these people do themselves and the

trouble they cause by their own thieving, but on their ability to teach others the ways of delinquency. We have mentioned this elsewhere, but I feel the need of insisting on it again here.

Physical Ailments and Bad Habits of Defectives.—Because children are mentally defective is no sign that they have not physical ailments that demand treatment. It is rather surprising to hear occasional expression of opinion to the contrary. It seems to be sometimes felt that if they are found mentally abnormal there is no need of doing anything for them medically. As a matter of fact, they show on the average much more than usual in the way of physical abnormalities, and physical conditions causing irritability are going to make the mental defective just so much more likely to show antisocial traits. Perhaps our best evidence on this point has been gained through observing truancy among defectives who are not up to par physically. One boy, who at twelve was much of a thief in his neighborhood, showed not only over four years of mental retardation, but he also suffered from nasal obstruction, chronic heart disease and badly needed circumcision. One was not surprised to find that he was dissatisfied even in the special room where he was placed. It is quite possible, too, for the feebleminded to engage in bad habits that may lead them toward such delinquency as stealing. We have known many who were addicted to cigarette smoking, who were indulging in bad sex habits, and one

or two cases who even were addicted to drugs. All of these troubles should be taken note of and treated as thoroughly as possible.

Need for Segregation of Defectives.—Concerning the main treatment of delinquent defectives there can be no question. When once a feeble-minded child has shown marked delinquent tendencies, segregation is nearly always indicated. For the several reasons that we have pointed out, the social chances of the future are against such an individual. On the other hand, it is a well established fact that the good habits that practically always are developed during proper and prolonged segregation in a well-equipped colony for defectives, do so influence tendencies that the individual is able to continue indefinitely there without being a disconcerting member of society. For such defectives as we are particularly concerned with in considering stealing, life in such a colony ought not to mean idleness or unhappiness. The individual may be trained to be largely self-sustaining and self-respecting. It is always a question whether or not, even after long training, normal social self-control may be evinced; very frequently this is not the case. The good habits that are formed can be utilized under these controlled conditions, and it is much better for relatives to make up their minds to give these socially incompetent ones the permanent care their defect justifies.

CHAPTER X

ABNORMAL MENTALITY—CONTINUED

BEFORE going any further with the discussion of mental abnormality in relation to stealing, a distinction should be made clear that is most important for the understanding of many cases of delinquency in children: Mental defect is something entirely apart and quite different from mental disease or aberration. In the one case the mental machine lacks from the beginning some parts that are necessary for normal functioning; in the other instance the machine may be all there, but its parts do not work in unison, or are poorly supplied with force, so that the output is not normal. Another simile that might be used is that the defective is like one going through life without some bodily part, say an arm, and consequently being partially devoid of power, while in the case of mental aberration it is like developing a disease of the arm. In the case of the absence, or defect, there is no cure; the diseased member, however, may be susceptible to therapeutic effort. The distinctions between these two should be a part of everybody's knowledge, since the possibilities in the way of education and other treat-

ment differ so widely according to these essential differences.

Children with Special Mental Defects.—Children who have some special mental deficiency, who are not up to normal in one or two faculties, are hardly to be called mental defectives. Of course, most of us could readily be found below par in some, perhaps for us, socially unimportant mental abilities. When a child in some restricted mental field is not up to normal, this may be an important fact if the special mental disability causes him social irritation and failure. If there is much trouble, for instance, with arithmetic, as the result of native incapacity, this may lead to truancy and stealing as the outcome of school dissatisfaction. We have seen a number of such instances. In some cases where the parents were intelligent enough to see the necessity for a readjustment of the child's life, or where the school system has been flexible enough to take care of the special problem without disparaging comparison of the individual, an entire alteration of conduct has been obtainable.

Adjustment of Cases with Special Mental Defects.—There is no sufficient reason in school or in occupational life for the complete misfit. When an individual of the type of which I am now speaking is properly studied by a good range of mental tests, his limitations and also his capacities can be ascertained, and adjustments can be advised in accordance. We have definitely known that with some

the dissatisfaction caused by their special disability led quite directly to misconduct, in one instance to vagrancy and petty stealing. Those who have been fortunate enough to see a case of this kind develop perfectly normal, social traits after proper adjustment of school work or vocation to special needs, can appreciate this particular basis on which delinquency can be readily built. Every effort should be made to understand and meet the needs of the individual who is limited by some special mental defect.

Children Mentally Dull from Physical Causes.—Then there is a type of mental disability which is not primarily due to any defect of brain or mind, but is rather the result of some physical condition outside of the central nervous system. Educators have had their attention drawn to this class of defective children especially through the work of Professor Witmer, who many years ago began clinical work with cases of this sort, particularly with a view to increasing their educational and social possibilities. We have found that there is sometimes direct connection between this combination of disabilities and stealing. The roots of development of delinquent tendencies are the same as in the prior type of cases. The child finds little comfort, satisfaction, or encouragement in school life. Sometimes he also finds himself unable to compete on fair terms in ordinary play with his fellows. The result may be, as in a number of cases we have known, that

sneaking social behavior is indulged in. Some very shrewd little thieves have proved to be of this type. It would surprise any one not acquainted with the beginnings of criminalism to see lads of eight to twelve years of age, who largely on account of their other social dissatisfactions, use their small hands for picking pockets, and are willing to show their adeptness in such tricks. It seems as if the stealing in these cases was compensatory behavior—the individual finds nothing else that gives, after all, quite so much satisfaction.

Treatment of Physical Causes for Mental Dulness.—Treatment of such cases involves getting the child upon a physical foundation for doing better. If the delinquent tendencies are already deep-set this remedy may not be sufficient, but sometimes it is. Those who are brought directly in contact with instances of this kind would do well to remember that the cost of a few months, or even a year or two, under more healthful conditions, perhaps in the country, where better mental interests can be aroused, amounts to very little compared to the possible expense to society if these individuals later develop into typical pickpockets and sneak thieves. When mental dulness or retardation has arisen as the result of bad habits special treatment must be given, as indicated in our chapter on that subject.

Few Children Are Insane.—Coming now to the discussion of mental disease or aberration, we may at the outset state that comparatively few chil-

dren become insane. When insanity does occur, there are usually well-marked, accompanying physical troubles, so that the case is easily recognized for what it is. An insane person of any age is one who is lacking in normal social judgment and control, and sometimes on this account may indulge in stealing. In children stealing from this cause is so infrequent that we may pass over it lightly; all cases are to be treated at once by specialists.

Insanity of Adolescence.—With the onset of adolescence, insanity becomes more frequent and, indeed, there is one form of mental trouble which, as shown by several names given to it, peculiarly belongs to that period of life. This disease is dementia precox. Delinquencies committed by sufferers from this form of insanity rarely include stealing. The individual is generally a solitary type with various well-marked aberrational tendencies, but impulse is not often toward taking the property of others.

Stealing in Border-Line Cases.—Much more important are the various border-line cases, or mild forms of mental upset or mental disability to be found among children. In many of these cases, quite unrecognized in their true nature in the schoolroom, and often quite neglected on the side of mental hygiene in their homes, we have known stealing to occur. Some of the mild forms of mental trouble may be best designated as minor psychoses, that is, those forms of mental aberration which do not

reach such a height that one would care to characterize them as insanities. Many of these are eminently curable. Then there are the cases on the border-line of mental defect, and in these, too, delinquency is very common. Our discussion below of these various types is, perforce, only illustrative and incomplete; quite inadequate for diagnosis, which must always be left for an experienced specialist.

The Constitutional Inferiors.—We may take first of these border-line types, the so-called constitutional inferiors. These are individuals who on account of congenital defects of organization are unable to cope with the world in an adequate way. The organic basis of their trouble is generally shown in some physical stigmata or defects. Their mental incapacity is shown by their weakness for sustained effort, their non-resistance to temptation and suggestion, their episodes of temper and irritability, their feelings of inadequacy. A typical example will probably offer the best presentation here of the characteristics of this type. A boy of thirteen, well nourished, short and stout, shows various physical defects, or stigmata. His development is childish, almost infantile; musculature peculiarly flabby; ears and palatal arch poorly formed; eyes differ in color and visual powers. Mentally he shows himself able to pass tests for his years; he rapidly runs through the twelve-year tests of Binet, but when given any prolonged task that requires good powers of at-

tention and continuity of effort, he fails. Things are always too hard for him to do. He plays truant occasionally. His teachers say he does well for a short spurt, but does not like to do any long task. His parents state that he is totally unreliable. He lies when it seems the easiest way to get out of anything. He steals to get means for enjoying exciting amusements, or for any little pleasures that suggest themselves to him. He himself tells us that he sees things in shop windows and wants them so badly that he can't resist the temptation of stealing money in order to get them. He has taken things from stores, as well as from home. He has purloined small amounts from neighbors' houses. His parents punish him, and then he always begs and pleads and promises to reform. Sometimes he gets very angry; he bursts into tears on the slightest provocation. Many who have observed him, pronounce him to be a weakling.

Treatment of Constitutional Inferiority.—This kind of a case can only be treated properly by putting him under simple conditions where his bodily health is developed to a maximum and where he is freest from social temptations. Nothing can be done to alter the original defect. There is very little chance for a child like this to develop social normality under complicated city conditions. All of us know very well the dangers and the outcomes. Simple life in the country should begin at an early age, before the call of city excitements is too strong. In-

dividuals of this type readily fall into the habit of using stimulants, and this should be guarded against.

The Psychoneurotics.—Quite a different type of abnormality to be found among children is that called a psychoneurosis. Here the individual may be bright or not, may be fully able to carry out a long piece of work, may not show any particular physical defects of importance, but often demonstrates nervous instability and easy excitability. We all know such individuals; in their desperate earnestness they may at times wear themselves out. As children, they may show periods of slight depression, more often of over-excitement. At this time of life they show good powers of recuperation. When such nervous children engage in stealing, their behavior is usually accompanied with symptoms of their nervousness, and they may become terrifically worked up about the affair. One has seen little girls of this type in which the stealing seemed to be almost a symptom of their disorder.

Outlook and Treatment of Psychoneurotics.—Cases should be handled with a good deal of care. Of course the outlook for them morally is, as a rule, good. They suffer so much from their misdoing that, with the advent of better control in later years, they are apt to stop stealing, but in the meantime one thinks of their nervous trouble as being the most important feature of the case to be cared for, and they should be properly treated under the direction of a wise physician. I think that, almost with-

out exception, cases of this kind cease their stealing when removed from the undue temptations of city streets, and amusements, such as they should be guarded from on account of their nervous troubles.

Minor Psychoses: Example, Chorea.—The only illustration I shall give here of a minor psychosis is that of chorea, or St. Vitus' dance. This is particularly selected because some cases of this disease form such splendid examples of delinquency correlated with mental aberration. In this disease, which affects in nearly all cases, to some degree, the cells of the cerebral cortex, there are exhibited states of mental confusion and lack of self-control. We ourselves have been astonished at the number of children who have been brought to our institute because of delinquency when the cases have proved to be chorea showing some slight disorder of intellection.

A Case of Chorea.—A boy of thirteen, who was reported to us by his mother for repeated stealing during the course of some months, was found to have been through two or three definite attacks of chorea in the last few years, and even at the time we observed him he still showed distinct signs of this disorder. As far as his behavior was concerned the boy would be quite normal at certain periods, and then again would show great restlessness and dissatisfaction at home. This led to his being out of the house much and mixing up with one or two bad companions. We were never quite sure

to what extent this boy initiated any thieving enterprises, but at least it was certain that he very easily acquiesced in suggestions of this sort. His mental state was so disordered, as was proved by mental tests and his general social reactions, that he could be said to be partially incapable of judging the consequences of his acts. Since he had not been studied carefully during previous periods we could never get any verification of the relation of his delinquency to his prior attacks of chorea, but it was certain that a recent escapade, in which he entered a house with another boy and stole a watch and some other valuables, had been done when he was not in full control of himself. We advised thorough observation and treatment, under which he ceased his delinquency. This was several years since, and the boy has had no further record of stealing.

Treatment of the Choreic Delinquent.—Chorea is one of the most curable of nervous diseases, and the mental symptoms that go with it nearly always disappear under proper treatment—the main feature of this being complete rest. No case should be neglected, on account of the danger of some chronic trouble arising. Even in this short statement we may say that in some rare instances the motor symptoms of the disease, the characteristic involuntary movements, may be nearly or entirely absent, and the mental symptoms predominate.

Adolescent Characteristics and Instabilities.—On the very border-line of mental upset lie adoles-

cent instabilities. Particularly in the first years of adolescence are these shown. In the cases of older delinquent children studied by us we have found it necessary very often to attribute their misbehavior to irregular mental tendencies characteristic of their time of life. Early adolescence is the period of new ideas, new wants and desires and cravings, new social relationships, new self-assertions and the various other phenomena that have been skilfully enumerated by students of this age-period. In some cases no doubt misbehavior is the result of heightened social suggestion at this time, but in many instances there is none of this; it is merely the springing up of such mental qualities as we have just mentioned that leads to the trouble. Still another and most significant characteristic of this period is the changeableness of mental attitude and the quick succession of ideas and conceptions of the self. Impulses arise and are given way to in a trice. The plans and ambitions of to-day are to-morrow forgotten.

Adolescent Instabilities Leading to Stealing.—The idea of stealing when it begins in adolescence may be self-initiated and be the impulse of an unreasoning moment, or it may be due to some of the experiences suggested in our chapters on Impulsions and Obsessions. We have often been interested to note that frequently the adolescent who engaged in stealing now for the first time says of himself that he does not know why he did this. He did not in-

tend doing it; here suddenly the impulse was with him and it was done. He regrets it and feels in a daze about the occurrence. In some instances there is so much disturbance shown by irritability at home and misconduct at school, that one is tempted to think of a real mental upset, perhaps a temporary adolescent psychosis. Most frequently we find evidences of adolescent mental changes and instabilities other than the stealing itself. It is hardly necessary to give illustrations of this type of cause for stealing; the general facts are quite plain.

Treatment and Outlook in Cases of Adolescent Instability.—I have little doubt that in the majority of these cases the individual when he comes to himself ceases his thieving. In fact, the treatment involves, more than anything else, just this awakening of the individual through developing self-consciousness, on the basis of which he can gain self-control. Of course, in most cases, there is a complication of other factors, such as bad companions, poor home interests and the like. Each of these should be taken into account for what it is worth. When physiological phenomena, particularly those connected with premature development and over-development, complicate the picture there is more moral danger. Then the individual should be taken care of with the physical side particularly in mind. We may mention here the point well known to neurologists, namely, that those children who come from poor, nervous and mental stock are more

prone than others to suffer from mental instabilities at puberty or in the few following years.

One could not advocate in these adolescent cases any excuse for further delinquency on the ground that the individual was incapable of self-control or of knowing right from wrong. The fact that self-control was not exercised, that the individual showed in the stealing no appreciation of the wrongfulness of the deed, bespeaks the age phenomenon that does not indicate any real incompetency in either direction. The individual, therefore, is to be handled simply as one who can do better and who needs to be awakened. Although others, including the family, must not shield or excuse the offender, yet there should be a deliberate attempt to help him find himself.

Forms for Treatment to Take.—To some extent the new self-assertiveness of this period should be recognized as normal, and on the other hand, the need for self-control and social obligation is to be taught in full measure. This is one of the great character-forming periods of life, and the slight mental aberrations of which we speak should be considered in reference to later development. The individual's future should be held in mind. All healthful mental interests should be offered as never before, and the banefulness of bad companionship should be thoroughly taken into account. Out of these adolescent instabilities, and through the forming of bad companionships, bad physical and mental

habits and a bad reputation at this time of life, come the development of whole criminal careers.

Epilepsy and Delinquency.—When considering mental abnormality as correlated with stealing in children, the group most important, after mental defectives, is that composed of the epileptics. There are various forms of epilepsy and we by no means intimate that all varieties are accompanied by mental disorders. Yet peculiarities of character and temperament are so characteristic of epilepsy that no discussion of delinquency is complete without a thorough understanding of the part that this disease plays. Very repeatedly in our studies of children have we found that a boy or a girl with distinct antisocial tendencies was the victim of this disease.

Basis of Stealing by Epileptics.—Stealing may be engaged in by the epileptic because he is the victim of faulty inhibition of impulses, lack of normal self-control, abnormal social suggestion and reckless self-indulgence. These special mental traits typically develop during the course of this disease. Stealing, unlike acts of violence, is very rarely indulged in during automatic or other mental states directly connected with an epileptic attack. Epilepsy is very frequently accompanied by a gradual deterioration that brings about even in childhood just such tendencies as we have mentioned. Many writers speak of "the epileptic character"; and this is one that has direct relationship to delinquent tendencies.

Treatment of the Epileptic Delinquent.—There is no type that more urgently needs segregation than the epileptic delinquent. Until some cure is found for the poor victims of this disease one knows of no way in which to check their character tendencies. Epileptics feel themselves unfortunate and at outs with the world, and sometimes feel they are justified in assuming the utmost recklessness in their careers. This can not help but increase their social undesirability. We freely acknowledge the most difficult situations we have ever been called on to handle have been those in connection with epileptic delinquents. One sees no help in many of these cases other than permanent segregation in a colony, where their attacks and tendencies can be minimized and where they are under the least possible social strain and subject to the fewest temptations. Stealing represents only a part of their delinquent tendencies.

Basis for Delinquent Tendencies in Aberrational Individuals.—Just as we asked how it is that the mental defective becomes delinquent, so one might query why the aberrational individuals we have been discussing should show delinquent tendencies. There are some distinctions between the two. A child suffering from an aberration, or a psychosis, is likely to act on an impulse started from within. The erratic working of the mental processes, the development of unusual mental imagery may thus directly lead to delinquency. Of

course the aberrational individual, too, may be characterized by poor self-control, and then may succumb unduly to the suggestions of others; showing then the characteristics of the feeble-minded. This may be true in cases of chorea and adolescent mental upset, as we have shown above. One of the main differences between defectives and psychosis cases is concerned with habit formation; in the aberrational types we have been discussing, impulses are usually temporary and not particularly repeated, certainly never to the degree and in the set forms that we see so frequently in cases of the feeble-minded. In most of the aberrational cases a main point in treatment involves introducing more incentive toward restraint of impulses and better development of powers of will. As suggested under the head of adolescent instability, perhaps it may be possible to cultivate better apperceptions. In all cases protection from bad influences is a prime necessity.

CHAPTER XI

IMPULSIONS AND OBSESSIONS

WE HAVE found nothing in our study of delinquents more important to understand, even for the most practical considerations, than the causes of juvenile impulsions and obsessions toward dishonesty. The importance is emphasized both by the large number of children one has met with where stealing was at once frankly stated by the delinquent to be the result of uncontrollable mental activities, and by the fact that in many cases, notwithstanding much admonishment, there was no change of conduct until the fact and the background of the impulsion were ascertained. Indeed, it was only through observation of some few cases of enduring cures, after the real nature of the trouble had been found out, that we were convinced of the great rôle that mental experiences and mental mechanisms play in this form of delinquency. On the other hand, we have come to know of long careers of criminalism, reaching up to adult life, which have been almost entirely founded on unsuspected mental experiences during childhood. It is safe to say from what we have learned, that when a child

has developed a tendency to stealing on a basis of certain experiences quite unrevealed to relatives and guardians, he stands a large chance of continuing in such conduct. To society, then, the value of understanding the individual's troubles and adequately meeting them is very great, since there are these types of experience that otherwise lead to long years of social misconduct.

Our Exposition Not Technical.—It is rather difficult to enter this field of discussion from the non-technical side. It would be much easier to go at once into elaboration of what might be called the mental mechanisms of the situation that arises when such impulses as we are concerned with are set going. But we should then be dealing with the more professional aspects of psychology, and these we wish here to avoid. In the last decade there has been wide dissemination of knowledge concerning the possibilities of the application of psychological analysis, or psychoanalysis as it is sometimes called, in the sphere of the investigation of human conduct and its causes. Perhaps a better term than any is the one recently proposed by Sidis, namely, psychognosis—this expressive word signifying the knowing of mentality, the knowing of the content and mechanisms of the mind that lead to action. In these newer realms of psychological science by now there have been built many structures embodying technical principles and details which it is not our place here to consider. What we can do, however,

is to show clearly that this vitally important field does really exist with already discovered manifestations and many known details of interest to us.

Facts, Not Methods, Given.—When it comes to dealing with individual cases of delinquency, and that, after all, is the principal step to be taken, we are not at all sure that any amount of ordinary explanation will suffice to give to the inexperienced enough mastery of the subject to carry out successful analysis of the psychological situation. And only from this analysis comes such cure of suitable cases as expert investigation and proper following of well-founded advice affords. As in any other professional technic, long acquaintance with the subject and with many varieties of human individuals alone gives the qualifications of a successful therapeutist. There are many particular considerations belonging to this subject that can never be taught, even from text-books, certainly not from such a short exposition as the present chapters offer. The many ways of getting at the matter differ as human individuals differ, and the experience that has been gained by dealing with large numbers may be an indispensable asset for knowing the right method of approach. We say all this by way of mild warning, so that readers of our discussion will not feel that from these pages alone one can get sufficient knowledge to go ahead with the difficult subject of psychological analysis. Should they do so they need not be surprised at failure. Our busi-

ness here is simply to point out the existence of the general facts, just as the hygienist nowadays addresses the layman and tells him of bodily disorders and of the possibilities of their prevention, without in any way intimating that knowledge is thereby offered of how to conduct a campaign of treatment against an ailment that already exists.

Attitude of Children in These Cases.—In the investigation of juvenile delinquency, particularly in studying the child who steals repeatedly, sometimes we may observe a most curious attitude that the young person takes toward himself and his own conduct. Scores and perhaps hundreds of times, we have been met by a statement on the part of the delinquent that the conduct was something that could not be helped. Only yesterday a boy of thirteen, thoroughly good in other respects, a member of an estimable family, said, "I don't know what comes over me, Doctor. It seems as if it is something I can't help. I am ashamed of it afterward. I just see something that doesn't belong to me and I take it." It, then, not only appears from the standpoint of the onlooker that something curious and altogether undesirable is going on in the mental processes of such an individual with delinquent tendencies, but it frequently appears the same to the delinquent himself. Affairs in that part of the mental life which controls conduct move along in ways that are not obviously explicable, and results ensue that are not wished for in the moments of more normal

self-control and self-understanding. In other words, even the child looks back on his conduct as the result of irrational and inexplicable impulse. "I don't know why I do such things. I really don't want to do them," is another frequent type of statement. Sometimes the child himself feels that his actions and their underlying bases form a fair field for some investigatory procedure.

Some Children Not Introspective.—However, in other cases of stealing by children, even where unsuspected mental experiences or mechanisms may be at fault, there is a total unconsciousness of the main fact. The child does what he does, as it were, and lets it go at that. There is not the amount of introspection or philosophizing that is indicated in the case cited in the preceding paragraph. But even so, most often the delinquent may be awakened by the experienced student of the subject to the real genesis of his trouble; apperceptions may be quickly developed and the beginnings brought to memory. The sudden understanding of the nature of his own delinquent tendencies sometimes clearly comes as a great surprise and there may be open-eyed astonishment. A new vision into the past is unexpectedly afforded. "Now I see why I happened to do those things. I never thought of that before." Such new appreciations as these we have repeatedly heard voiced.

Approach to Problem.—We shall have occasion often to come back to environmental conditions

in considering various phases of our present topic, but even in speaking of the approach to the individual, environmental influences are to be taken account of. We find, for instance, that where a family has taken the more rational attitudes toward life, and particularly toward conduct, even if the true sources of delinquency have never been tapped, the process is far easier than when the misdoing has been previously met in other ways. A mere disciplinary standpoint toward their children on the part of the parents or other guardians is very apt to produce a state of mind that is anything but favorable for working out the understanding for fundamental changes in traits of conduct. (I would that in courts of law, too, and in carrying out penal measures this deep psychological principle might be appreciated.) When a teacher, or even an expert student of delinquents, meets a problem in misconduct, special resistances and special difficulties are very apt to be found when the prior attitude under the parental roof has been that of retaliation and repression. A child then is very likely to be hard to get at, hard to manage, hard to understand. Fortunately sometimes, especially in the young child, even then a more kindly and more inquiring approach may suddenly gain the confidence that has all along been necessary for amelioration of the delinquent conduct. But in other instances it seems as if the child said to himself, here is another of those disciplinarians, here is more punishment com-

ing to me, and the best thing I can do is to say as little as possible.

Advantages of Early Study.—Other things being equal, we find that the earlier there is expert investigation of such causes as we are now dealing with, the easier it will be to ascertain them. And this for two reasons: Memories of beginnings are then so much fresher, and in earlier years there is apt to be much more ingenuousness in regard to the whole matter of delinquency. Concerning the first of these two points, it is, of course, clear that as the years go on, stratum is superimposed on stratum in the mental and social experience of the individual, and that what earlier stood out with great sharpness may now be deeply buried. What was previously near the surface one may now have to dig for. As a matter of fact, the memories of the first experiences vital for the development of delinquency may be relegated already to the subconscious life; they may not even have been remembered for years. This is a situation that practitioners of psychological analysis in the adult have most often to meet, and it obtains in some measure during even the years of childhood. And then not only is the more recent memory clearer, but for the events lately transpired there is the more chance of corroboration in many of the important details. Since so many of the mental experiences we deal with in this chapter involve some form of social intercourse, what is to be obtained in the way of verification of funda-

mental issues may be most valuable. Then concerning the other point, namely, ingenuousness; this is proportionately greater in the young child. To be sure one occasionally finds inscrutability among children, and particularly among those who are victims of just such mental conflicts and repressions as we are concerned with here, but on the whole there is before mid-adolescence nothing like the wall of self-sufficiency and dislike for self-revealment that is shown among those who are approaching adult life.

The general advantages of dealing with delinquency during its early manifestations are so great for society that they form to my mind one of the greatest reasons for throwing vastly more emphasis on childhood delinquency and the possible agencies of amelioration than has ever been done before. Of course, one might offer many arguments in favor of this general proposition, but here is a specific issue not generally thought of; the much greater possibility of ascertaining fundamental causes during the years when the individual both can and is willing to recall them most usefully.

Youthful Age of Beginning.—At this place we may say something about the extremely youthful age of beginnings of impulsions toward misconduct. I do not propose to introduce at this point in the discussion what may seem to be the extreme views of the psychoanalysists, even if the latter can ultimately prove their point, but we may safely deal with what we have been actually told by the child

and had corroborated. It is a notable fact that even young children may have immensely significant experiences which, together with the emotions these experiences produce, may be kept secret and which, by virtue of the mechanisms that are set going, may cause and color actions for many years. One has known frequently of such typical occurrences, which will be outlined when we get to the more concrete and definite points of this subject, coming into the life experience of a child as young as five years. We are inclined to believe, without such good proof, however, that similar effects may be produced even earlier. Dating back to six, seven and eight years we have many a history of events that have produced, through their surreptitious effect on the child, years of suffering to himself and his friends. So when investigating the causes of delinquency at ten and twelve years, or later, it may be quite necessary to go back a considerable time before the beginnings are found. Perhaps the greatest contribution that students of psychological analysis have made to knowledge is that the determinants of much that is important in human conduct are to be sought for in the experiences of the early years of childhood. From our many studies we can thoroughly substantiate this point.

Characteristics Correlated with Impulsions.—A few words are desirable concerning the characteristics of those who suffer from impulsions and

obsessions. At the outset we should very specifically state that it is by no means merely those children who are weaklings whose conduct is determined by impulsions. We have seen splendid examples of young strength and activity who have been thus afflicted. We have encountered many cases where the mental ability was well recognized as being above the average. This does not mean, however, that we should want to deny that those of poor physique and somewhat defective will and judgment are more prone to succumb to anti-social impulsions from many different causes. We are quite sure that unfortunate mental habits—and these have much to do with impulsions—are more easily grown on a poor soil. Indeed the correlations are obvious; many writers have pointed out that delinquency, for any one of a number of reasons, is more apt to be engaged in by the human underling. But the point we want here to insist on is that dynamic connections between childhood experiences and the formation of delinquent tendencies may readily develop in an individual quite normal and, indeed, above the average in ability. One could picture many cases of both boys and girls who are perfectly sound physically, with good mental capacities, and who sometimes are doing well in their work at school, whose tendencies to steal are fairly obsessional and have been built up on a foundation of some secret experience that has long been overwhelming to their moral natures.

Proof of this Cause.—In studying and discriminating causes it is always fair to be asking for proofs. Particularly in such newer findings as these, where we are dealing with a subject quite foreign to the knowledge of those who have not kept pace with recent developments of psychological science, it is quite proper that corroborative evidence should be called for. We ourselves demanded this from the beginning of our studies and may state that for long we felt quite disinclined to accept this idea of impulsions based on early experience, but waited for individual cases through their outcome to demonstrate the fact. One was not satisfied with merely tracing back the memories of the individual to the point that he said was the starting place. One was not convinced, even with the addition of the outside testimony that was available in some instances. But what has appeared to clinch the truth of the existence of this type of genesis of delinquency has been the fact that after the mental states and the experiences which the child portrayed have been completely met by counteractivities there has been complete cessation of the misconduct. Nothing can controvert this therapeutic result based on studies of causes. We have seen it happen now so frequently that the original doubt which we had has entirely disappeared. When one sees, as we now have seen many times, a child fairly notorious as a little thief quite desist from a career, immediately following the remedial activities that we

have just mentioned, then one has verification that steps out of the bounds of subjective phenomena. The child's analytic statement that some given experience was the cause of the delinquent tendency, even though one ascertained this event to have taken place, is not nearly such good evidence as getting curative results from attack along the lines the stated cause suggested.

Both Sexes Involved.—When studying separate causative factors of delinquency we note that sometimes one sex is afflicted far more than the other. For instance, the love of adventure plays an important rôle in causing boys to steal, but in the case of girls there is comparatively little thieving to be attributed to this. Impulsions and obsessions, however, play a significant part in both sexes. Some of the most striking examples are seen in the cases of little girls who show a remarkable trend in their carrying out of bold stealing. This seems all the more remarkable because of the modesty and shrinking from street life and from boyish activities that we expect on the part of their sex. Until one has learned the details of some of those strange careers, where girls of even good families have for years stolen excessively and in such sly ways that they have not been detected, one does not realize how far impulsions and obsessions can carry an individual who is not in the least to be reckoned as insane. It is hardly necessary to mention the cases of young women who engage in pathological stealing, or

"kleptomania." During adult years excessive stealing in unnecessary ways is more frequent among females. I am not sure that anything more needs to be said about the different characteristics of the sexes in this matter, or about the differences in beginnings or in forms of treatment. The same general principles hold true for both boys and girls.

Understanding Rather than Disciplining.— There is no phase of the newly developing science of conduct that so well illustrates the deep necessity for understanding the causes of improper behavior as this subject of impulsions and obsessions. Nothing so directly shows the fundamental weakness as well as the practical failure of superficial treatment. Discipline by itself particularly is apt to accomplish nothing in these cases. The parent or direct disciplinarian, as we said in the introduction, who merely superimposes the command of negation, however well he enforces it, gets in the majority of these cases a reaction that fails to hit the mark. Inducing the conduct, there is something going on in the mind that is not to be checked by any mere command or expressed wish of the victim himself. The sooner guardians of childhood realize the fact that while allowing thoroughly for individual differences, there are such things as laws of mind and mental mechanisms that persistently control conduct, the better it will be for the development of character. Neither adjurations, nor threats, nor actual punishments can offer fundamental treatment

if some hidden mental machinery has been set going. Direct opposition to the misdoing turns out to be superficially inadequate. One must undermine the prime cause, not assail what is rooted on it. The failure of treatment attempted along ordinary lines affords another instance where therapy is prescribed without diagnosis of the essential ailment being made. But no amount of general statement on this point is so convincing as the study of concrete material, of living cases, where all sorts of endeavors have been made without avail until the real source of the difficulty was ascertained. Then we do get clear showing of the real trouble and light is shed on the way out of the same.

Psychological Principles Involved.—Still avoiding technical discussion as much as possible, it behooves us to deal in short with a few psychological principles that bear on this whole question of impulsions and obsessions. In the first place, misconduct arising from these sources shows more clearly than ever that conduct itself is merely the result and expression of mental activities. Here we have certain social behavior turned out as a product, and an unfortunate one, of definite psychological activities controlled according to mental laws. Some unfortunate experience, of the types that we shall presently mention, sets going in this undesirable way mental machinery that already exists. This is the fact that is so interesting. And the machinery continues to act, even though it is clearly

working against the interests of the individual as well as of society. It belongs to our practical discussion to draw attention to the fact that these young delinquents frequently suffer repeatedly as the results of their misdoing. They even suffer from the action of their own conscience as well as through external punishments inflicted, and yet they proceed on their path. In other words, the machinery does not stop, although its output is quite undesired. Of course there is much analogy between this and the various habit impulsions that students of conduct in older people and neurologists come to know about.

Associational Dynamics.—Why does the mental machinery act in this way? Well, there are ineradicable laws of mental life concerned. Given certain early experiences which had a highly emotional import, or which were directly associated with other experiences which had such import, and then let there be suppression of these in the inner consciousness, and we get as a result the type of misconduct we are now studying. Afterward there may be breakings out every now and again, the immediate cause of which is not always clear. In some cases we learn that from time to time there has been a sudden unconscious renewal of association processes with a starting up of the old machinery, a forcing into action of what has become suppressed tendencies. The so-called impulse starts up as the result of some immediate although unrecognized

stimulus. The forces at work being invisible and having little to do with the usual causes of ordinary action, what pulls the trigger, as it were, is not to be known without study of all that has gone before in the making up of tendency to action. It is very true that this mechanism of conduct introduces unusual elements. The individual himself, if you question him, feels it to be strange. He often is unconscious of what starts this chain of suggestions or associations that lead to the overpowering impulse. "I don't know what comes over me," is often the victim's expression.

Emotions at the Core.—There can be no doubt that a large share of these unfortunate impulses originate from elements in the emotional life—that part of our mental being which gives strength and force to our ideas and behavior. One never fails to ascertain that the original experience which results in the formation of the character tendencies we are discussing had a deep emotional significance. Now in an emotion suppressed, as all these early force-producing experiences unfortunately are—that is, kept as a secret from natural guardians—there is always a reactive tendency. The only way to avoid some sort of consequences is for there to be proper escapement at once of the emotion-generated forces. If the whole affair is suppressed it remains as a force producer from that time until there is possibly relief some day by conscious breaking up of the whole mechanism. Not only the ex-

perience that originally was the central focus of the emotion, but also experiences that were immediately contiguous may be endowed with this same power and act through the laws of association. The fact that there is a stealing impulse may not indicate that the original experience was centered on stealing. Sometimes the main trouble has been with something that was far more significant to the individual than stealing, but stealing was learned about at the same time, or from the same person, or was associated in some other way so that it was readily recalled by the laws of mental association. The main point is that the original set of experiences came into the life of the child with an unwonted impact. The child then did not have at its service the full confidence of a parent, and immediately forced into the background of mental life as a secret all that it had learned. From this hidden center there develops from time to time forces that show themselves in conduct. All of this becomes clear in the light of concrete data obtained from many cases.

Preventive Treatment.—If there is any one lesson that is worth while learning either from these more general considerations or from the study of actual material, it is that parents and other guardians must have more awareness of their children's experiences, mental needs and the laws of their mental life. The hundreds of times that we have seen harm follow in the wake of children's experiences that were not known to their elders have led

us to be vastly impressed by the needs of the fullest confidences on all occasions and on all subjects between child and guardian. There is the most definite necessity for little people telling what they have seen and what they have done. For them to bottle up within themselves affairs of importance is a dangerous proceeding. We should most earnestly counsel that children should be accustomed to go over the items of their daily life with their guardians that there may be no hidden knowledge to be dwelled on in morbid fashion. Of all forms of prevention of delinquency I know of nothing comparable to the confidences and counsels between elders and children.

Relation of Sex Experiences to Stealing.—The nature of experiences that are going to be most provocative of trouble are those that have emotional context, and these are, for the most part, gained with children who are themselves delinquents. Sex matters, which all through life have greater emotional bearing than any other ideas or activities, naturally disturb the child more than anything else. It is these experiences which one finds more frequently than anything else at the basis of the delinquent impulses that form the subject of our present chapter. It is according to the laws of life itself that this should be so. In the light of all these facts, it behooves parents to be especially on the lookout for clandestine experiences which their children may have and may suppress.

Proper Purveyors of Sex Knowledge.—There are many reasons offered from the side of decency and esthetics why parents should be the purveyors of sex knowledge to their children. We can suggest an additional argument from our present discussion concerning the indirectly baneful influences of secret knowledge of sex matters. Prior to becoming a student of delinquency I had supposed, as others do, that the effect of surreptitious sex knowledge was always to be found in the world of sex things, but, in accordance with the psychological mechanisms outlined above, one finds the influence of such secrets spreading virulently over into other fields. Indeed, this is one of the cardinal points insisted on by students of psychological analysis, namely, that knowledge of sex affairs improperly gained, and with or without bad sex habits, may lead to the most untoward results in the life and conduct of the individual, perhaps years afterward. There is no question about the accuracy of the facts; there is no doubt about the possibilities of prevention. The class of readers to whom this work is addressed, while not qualified to treat these technical phases of an already established delinquent career, are competent to deal with the preventive aspects of this trouble. If they have not already sufficient preparation, it should be their business above everything to fit themselves to obviate the effect of influences that may be so harmful in their children's lives.

CHAPTER XII

IMPULSIONS AND OBSESSIONS—CONTINUED

THE next step in our exposition of impulsions and obsessions as related to stealing is the presentation of illustrative facts taken from case histories. In doing this we propose to offer only such observations as may fairly represent the nature of the subject under discussion. To this end we shall not give any of the highly exaggerated cases that are only occasionally met with. To be sure, no two individuals and no two careers are exactly alike, but it is remarkable how conduct started from repressed mental life in childhood tends to run in the same grooves. So it is quite possible, if one avoids presentation of the more extraordinary cases, to deal with material that is thoroughly typical.

Differences Caused by Varieties of Personality and Environment.—It need hardly be said that effects of environmental conditions are always to be found in these cases, and beyond the primary fact that the differences in nature of individualities cause mental reactions to differ, variations of environment are always at work to give us still further chance of getting differences in the stealing

arising from impulsions. Probably in the same way the genesis in experience of no two cases could be found to be exactly alike. The reader can easily picture variations on the causes and careers which we give. It also may be easily conceived how the type of conduct we are at present dealing with may go on to develop into a full-fledged career of criminalism; the individual showing tendencies rooted deeper and deeper through habit formation. With this preliminary statement to give some indication of the limitations of our discussion of cases, we may offer the following studies selected from our large material, in illustration of the general principles given in the last chapter.

The Case of Celia.—We may first take a case seen about four years ago, so that the time elapsed may be sufficient to show any change of character tendencies following the study made at that time. Celia, eleven years of age when we first saw her, was a bright-faced, responsive, remarkably straight-backed, prim little girl. One could hardly believe the long story of her peculations recounted by her parents. In fact, one found it advisable to gain some knowledge of the parents before any fair estimate of the whole situation could be made. The mother can be described as quiet and orderly, an active housekeeper, who had been doing her best to look properly after the mental and moral sides of her daughter's development. There were no other children. The mother in early life had been a school-

teacher. The father was a clerk in a large establishment where only the possession of a good character would have enabled him to hold his position. His salary was sufficient to keep the family comfortably and, indeed, they could afford little luxuries. In summer, they were accustomed to spend their vacations in a small country town where Celia's great-aunt lived. Occasionally the little girl had been left there for weeks at a time because she liked it so much and it was evidently so much better for her health than city life. The family connections on both sides were honorable and moderately successful people; there were no traces of defects in heredity.

The developmental history, obtained from the intelligent parents, who had been medically well advised, was negative in import for us. The child was rather frail, but of an active and responsive disposition. In school she had been regarded earlier as quick-minded, but in the last year or two there had been a falling off in her school work. Both the mother and the teacher noticed this. After unsuccessful attempts to combat it, they wondered if it was not due to physical conditions. However, we could discover nothing of significance in this direction; Celia was of a physical type that is apt to do exceedingly well mentally. She had a splendidly shaped head and her alert active manner betokened energy. On mental tests we found her ability somewhat in advance of the normal. There was no

question but that she had the background for doing much better in school than she was doing. She was in the fifth grade, but her parents thought she might have been in the sixth or seventh, had she exerted herself. The report from teachers in regard to general deportment was decidedly good and accorded with what her parents stated. In general she was obedient, very modest, cleanly, and usually a good-tempered child. She lied only about her delinquencies.

The main trouble with this little girl was her misconduct, which took the following extraordinary forms: For about three years she had been stealing. Concerning the number of times she had taken things, her parents would not venture an estimate. They thought that it would be conservative to say that she had stolen on a hundred occasions. She had taken things from her family, from the garments or handbags of visitors at her home, from neighbors' houses, from grocery stores, and on one occasion she had taken a little necklace from a jewelry shop. Some of the things she had taken she could utilize and others she could not; some of the things she probably wanted, and some evidently were not in the least desired by her. The money she had taken she had spent by herself or with other school children for soda-water and candy. Her parents were in utter despair about the matter. They had disciplined her in various ways and even severely whipped her for it. At times they had made

her return the things, and had attempted to improve her morals in every way. By this time her thefts had cost them a sum they could not afford. Her last misconduct had been a little bit worse than anything else, because she had stolen the teacher's pocketbook and been disgraced before the whole school.

The parents were quite at a loss for an explanation; they told how Celia always seemed to feel sorry after her misdeeds and continually stated she did not know why she did these things. They had gone into the question from the standpoint of heredity and prenatal impressions because they knew of nothing else to look for by way of causation. It seems that Celia's father soon after his marriage was much wrought up by the stealing of a fellow clerk. There had been a great deal of talk about it in the office and it was a question as to how the innocent ones should be able to clear themselves, and later there was much worry, particularly on the part of Celia's father, about doing the right thing for the embezzler and his family. Celia's mother was much concerned about the affair and it was at this time that she was pregnant. Celia's conduct made them hark back to this affair of eleven years previously, and it seemed to them that this was the only possible explanation. The pregnancy was thoroughly normal from the physical standpoint and the child was healthy in every way when born, and progressed in quite the usual way.

We set about the study in this case after ascertaining all of the above facts that showed so little variation from the normal. It became a question of genetics. Why did this little girl begin her career of stealing and what was there back of her impulsions? That they were impulsions we had no more doubt than had her parents, after talking to Celia for a little while. She told us that she really did not want to steal, that she was very sorry afterward, that she had stolen so many times that she could not remember them all, that it was always the result of an idea that suddenly sprang into her mind and she did not know how or why.

It is only fair to say that this girl from the first showed every mark of having been rationally treated. She had been brought to us with the straightforward understanding that we were going to try to find out why she stole. Celia had acquiesced in coming, and there was no deception in the matter. She had also heard that if she did not show better conduct immediately the school authorities were going to invoke the agencies of the court, but, after all, such threats had been made before. We saw that, in general, Celia had been dealt with as a rational human being, and had been taught that effects imply causes. She was also accustomed to the ordinary confidences with her mother. The parents' explanation to her of the part I was to play was quite sufficient to establish friendliness between us. I call attention to this because in this particular in-

stance there was almost no trouble in breaking down emotional or recalcitrant oppositions to our inquiry. In fact, the affair turned out to be very simple; the only technic involved was that of getting in the quickest way at the genesis of her impulsions.

We very quickly found out that Celia had met a whole world of experiences of which her parents knew nothing. They were astounded later when we told them. This new field was very easily opened up by our inquiry concerning whom she first knew to have stolen. Without the slightest hesitation she told about a certain little girl who lived in the country town where they spent their vacations. This girl was two or three years older than Celia and evidently had been the leader in their companionship. It was in the summer three years previously, as nearly as I could safely calculate, when Celia discovered this girl, Matilda, to be a thief. She took change from her mother and also purloined eatables and other things from stores. Dropping this line of inquiry we then asked Celia if any thoughts bothered her. She denied this, but showed open-eyed astonishment at our query. Going back to Matilda we asked for information as to her morality in other ways, and obtained the answer that gave us the clew to the whole situation. Yes, Matilda was the person from whom Celia had first obtained sex knowledge. Yes, it was true that these things did much bother our little girl and that they frequently came up in her mind—the ideas of these things and

bad words, too. Now, it must be remembered that Celia's mother had informed us that the child was remarkably innocent in these directions; she had never heard her utter a word indicating knowledge along these lines, and she was scrupulously particular about exposing her person—remarkably so, it seemed to us, since she objected to letting her mother see her undress.

The above was found out in one or two interviews. In the course of further study carried on by us and by her parents, who were thoroughly willing to cooperate, we found out the details of the whole affair, exploring them for the very rational purpose of so knowing them that they might be directly and completely assailed. That summer, Matilda, who belonged to a slattern and notoriously careless family, initiated Celia in sex things. She offered the child such fragmentary bits of information as she possessed and gave her a new vocabulary of words, about which Celia had only the barest hints of meaning. She told her something about sex practises, but it is doubtful if these ever had any enticement for Celia; it was in the world of ideas that Celia's repressions and conflicts arose. She knew that Matilda perhaps indulged in secret practises and perhaps enjoyed herself with boys; the girl at least boasted of it.

Our investigation concerning what in the mental content, particularly in her mental association proc-

esses, could possibly lead to any impulse to steal, showed that it was through the flashing into her mind of the ideas or the words that Matilda had taught her. We obtained an ingenuous account of the struggle against these thoughts, and all unconsciously there came out very clearly the mental mechanisms by which the impulse to steal was developed. Something in daily life led to a flashing into mind of these sex ideas. Celia, through her mother's example of reticence on these matters, felt that they must be altogether wrong and were to be suppressed, and yet they represented a wonder-world that existed, but about which she had obtained no other information. She at once asked her mother in a mild way and was told that when she got older it would be time enough for her to know about such things. So she felt she must down these thoughts when they involuntarily appeared in her mind. For all the world she would not think of doing any such things as Matilda had suggested; she knew these must be exceedingly wrong; yes, much worse than stealing.

In the case of such a young child as Celia it is usually difficult to find introspective ability enough to trace the direct connections in mental associations between the repressed idea and the misconduct. We did find, however, in one or two instances that a kind of mental struggle about sex thoughts had preceded a theft. It was so one day recently, when Celia was at home reading and came across some

names that at once brought to mind the group in the little town and the boy with whom Matilda had boasted she had enjoyed illicit pleasures. Celia could remember that recent event in mental life very definitely, and also that she thought of how bad it was, and that she very soon afterward took money from her mother's purse and went out to spend it.

However, in this case, one got no such clear tracing of the associational mental chain as in some older individuals we have studied. But the general fact of the genesis in such a typical dual situation—the knowledge of stealing arising contiguously to another mental experience that had a deep emotional significance and which was repressed—is nowhere better brought out. In spite of all her punishments and warnings, the girl herself, strangely enough, felt that her greatest difficulty was not about the thieving, but about the other hidden affair for which she had never been reprimanded in the least. Celia's point of view was taken as the true one, and the parents were intelligently willing to believe that it was only on this ground that her misconduct was to be therapeutically met.

The outcome of this case would go much further toward proving to the general observer the facts of the beginnings that we have outlined, or at least the facts of the mechanisms involved, than anything else. However, the final outcome is always largely dependent on the treatment that can be carried

out and on the intelligence of those who have control of the child, as well as on the original discovery of the essential facts. Celia was handled in a firm way by the good sense of the parents who closely followed the suggestions we gave. They knew of Matilda's reputation for petty stealing, but had never for a moment supposed that for the short time in the summer during which Celia was in Matilda's neighborhood, the older child could have had any such influence. In fact, during my inquiry with them into Celia's previous companionship they had even forgotten about Matilda. But now with unusually good discernment they were able to see how it might have happened and were competent to understand the emotional complications that might have set going Celia's impulses. They went still further into all sorts of details, as I directed them, and obtained even more satisfactory corroboration of the original incident. Then, still following our suggestions, they obtained from Celia an account of the specific words and ideas that recurrently flashed in her mind. They explained these to her with the idea of dissolving the element of clandestine mystery. Through the exercise of good judgment they were completely successful in this and, with a thorough bringing to light of the whole situation, there came about an immediate cessation of Celia's impulses to steal. We are informed by these thoroughly reliable parents, who brought the problem to us in the first place, that there has been

complete relief from the trouble over the four years that have elapsed.

The Case of Enos.—Another case that illustrates several different features of our problem is the following: Enos, a boy of twelve years, was brought to us because of his frequent stealing. He had also run away from home a couple of times. However, these escapades had proved anything but enjoyable. On one occasion he had been picked up by the police with his feet in a half-frozen condition. It was generally understood that he ran away because he had stolen. It was on the advice of an humane policeman, who had found the boy asleep in a hallway, that the mother brought him to us. As the officer said, it seemed there must be something the matter with a boy who would leave such a nice home. The mother then wondered if he was mentally subnormal. It was only his behavior, however, that she could offer as any indication of this. He had been progressing in school fairly well.

The history that the mother gave included as the main item the fact that he was an adopted boy. He had been afforded a good home and had never been ill or backward in any way. She stated that she did not wish the facts of his parentage to be revealed because she had always kept it from him. They had adopted him as an infant, parentage unknown, when they had no children of their own. A few years later two children were born to them, but they endeavored to make no distinction between him

and them. Lately, on account of his bad behavior, the mother confessed they did not feel so kindly toward the boy, and wondered if in the future they would continue to conceal the facts of his birth. He was a pleasant and normal boy until about a year previous, when he began to show character changes. Since that time he had on several occasions taken considerable sums of money, forty or fifty dollars at a time, and once had made off to another city. On this last occasion he had run away with only a small amount, and had seen much hardship in the week that he was gone. Indeed, it could not be ascertained that after any of his thieving he had much pleasure. The adopted parents wondered if he could be the child of a criminal and whether innate hereditary traits were showing themselves. The adopted father had about lost patience with the boy and advised sending him to an institution.

This was another case where the child met the inquirer with the utmost frankness, after the situation was made clear to him that it was an inquiry instituted for his own welfare. Previously he had been met with severe disciplinary measures, whipping and other punishments. Tests soon convinced us that it was as the parents said: there was no indication of any abnormality except in the way of behavior. General physical conditions were good, although there had been neglect of moderate eye strain and of large tonsils. However, neither of these could be thought of as being causes of the

misconduct. On mental examination he showed himself fair enough in ability, although not brilliant. He had been given common school advantages. In general temperament it was easy to see that we had to do with a highly sensitive boy, and this was all the more interesting to us because of the opposite temperament of his adopted parents. The father, we found, was a big blustering business man, a moderate drinker, a man of little patience, who prided himself on paying no attention to trifles. His wife, while perhaps not being quite of the same sort, had adapted herself to the home situation, and was fond of the hearty side of life. Undoubtedly they had provided this boy with plenty of material comforts, but as far as we could make out they had made not the slightest attempt to understand his nature.

When the boy realized our desire to be of service to him he seemed to feel no aversion whatever to bringing forward all that he knew and felt. In his mind there was a strange mix-up of ideas concerning human relationships. In the first place, it seems that in the neighborhood there had been some little knowledge or suspicion that these people were not his true parents. The "toughest" of his comrades, a boy who stole, told Enos that the woman who called him her child was not his mother. This followed on some crude teaching by this other boy concerning marriage and birth and illicit sex affairs. Enos indignantly told us about this first information on these points, and how he had kept it to him-

self. The new idea in regard to his parentage he revolved over and over in his mind. He gradually conceived many reasons for believing the fact to be as the boy had stated. He saw many differences between the treatment afforded him and that of the other children. He interpreted the general indifference of the father toward him as being caused by the fact that he was not really their son. He felt himself, he naively said to us, not to belong to that family. He long ago began to plan a career for himself away from them.

His bitterest thoughts were about the deception, for he was convinced that it was a deception that they had been practising on him. He had little to do with his boy-informant, but when he saw him it renewed, worse than ever, his mental conflict. All told, Enos gave us one of the strongest stories of mental upheaval and unrest that we have heard. His sensitiveness toward these aspects of life really bespoke fine mental qualities.

The stealing was the outcome of an impulse to do something that would get him away from his present unsatisfactory situation. He did not know how else to do it. We were very much amused to learn that he had deliberately obtained detective stories that he thought might contain accounts of criminal careers that would indicate the first steps necessary for a boy to break away from home. He felt that it would be an unlawful thing for him to do, and he would thereupon belong to the world of robbers

and bandits; so he would better learn something of their life. His suggestion toward all this seems to have come from the fact that the boy who first destroyed his peace was himself a young thief. Although Enos, of course, could not depict clearly his mental processes to us, yet it was plain to see how his impulses arose from this first development of deep dissatisfaction. His misconduct was always a direct reaction to his mental conflicts.

Discovering all this, we had to meet the circumstances in an entirely different manner from that in the case of Celia, cited above. The adopted mother of Enos, finding out that he had such affairs in his mind, said, "Well, since he knows it already we will have to tell him," but either she did not grasp the full import of his mental difficulties or would not take the trouble to go into them. Beyond mentioning the real facts of his parentage no confidences were established between Enos and his foster parents; the father would not be bothered with such matters. The boy was tried at home again, but with the same results; it was not long before he stole again, and after having spent his money in another town, walked from one place to another. His guardian now refused to have him at home any longer, and he was sent by private arrangement to a military school—the essential treatment that we had in mind never having been carried out.

The Case of Agatha.—That stealing results from impulsions which may begin very early in

life we have abundant evidence. At the risk of citing a case that may seem to be extreme we offer the following: A little girl of seven years, whom we will call Agatha, was studied by us because of her many thieving escapades. For over a year these had been strangely numerous and had involved stealing from home, neighbors and even shops. Many times articles taken from other houses had been found hidden in her room. The parents, highly cultivated people, were at an absolute loss to know what to do about the matter. Their punishments had been, at times, unusually severe. The little girl was active physically and precocious mentally. She came from decidedly intellectual but rather neurotic stock on both sides, but had showed no signs of any nervous trouble herself. The family felt disgraced although every one recognized the child as too young to be responsible. The stealing had become a nuisance and people refused to allow her in their houses. The parents put the question point-blank at us: "What can be the matter with this child; there must be something wrong?"

Possession of remarkable powers of memory and analysis on the part of this little girl enabled us, by paths that her cultivated parents had never dreamed of pursuing, to discover rapidly the trouble. We were fortunately able to get all the basic facts corroborated. When only about five and one-half years old this child had lived next door to a small boy, coming also from a very good

family, who in a perfectly childish way had introduced her to sex things. In fact, during one summer a little coterie of children, being allowed to play unsupervised for long hours in a summer-house, had drawn one another into affairs of sex life. It had started with the innocent play of keeping house. What they ultimately did in play they were too ashamed to mention to their parents. The little boy who was the play-paramour of Agatha was himself accustomed to steal. Indeed, she very definitely told us that before the summer-house affair she had known him to steal; as a matter of fact, he had stolen things from her. (This was corroborated by her parents.) It is quite doubtful if this little girl ever gave way to childish sex affairs to the extent that the others in the same crowd did; for some reason she early recognized them as improper, although she had had no teaching on this point. Soon afterward, however, she began stealing in that same neighborhood, and later when her parents moved to another city she continued her misconduct in the most excessive fashion, as we have indicated above. We were told by Agatha in the clearest terms about how the thought of that boy continually came to her, and of what he did there in the summer-house, and of how he stole. She insisted on the badness of the sex affairs, but seemed to think the stealing not in the same category. It proved, thus, to be a case that never could have been

handled properly without discovery of the genesis of the stealing impulse.

Chronic Stealing by Adolescents.—The rare instances of excessive stealing by adolescent girls, such as are known occasionally to high-school teachers, have often such a background as we have suggested in the preceding discussion, but, of course, there are many variations possible. One of the most remarkable facts about such cases is that the individual sometimes has been stealing for years; she may have taken scores of articles from stores and other places and never been detected. We have come to know intimately some young people who have had careers not excelled for repetition of misconduct by inmates of penitentiaries. It is not within our province here to give any of these cases of so-called "kleptomania," because they belong more to the field of criminalistics. But yet every now and again such a case is first discovered by a school-teacher or parent and the general facts should be a matter of common knowledge.

Rarely it is a boy who is a victim of these impulsions, but more often a girl. The basis of the trouble is certainly to be found in most cases by studying the mental mechanisms in just such ways as I have already described. Of course this is not nearly so easy a matter as with the younger children, but yet it is surprising to find that many of these older misdoers feel the need of being understood and

helped. They have conflicts, repressions, feelings of dissatisfaction and restlessness, followed by the giving way to impulsions. Penitence often ensues in full measure.

Self-Knowledge of the Trouble and Penitence.—We knew one high-school boy whose general character was of the best; it was hard for his family to understand why he stole. He said to us at first, "I steal because it makes me feel good to steal, but I am terribly sorry afterward." After a time we discovered that he himself thought that the real trouble was not his stealing, but was the other things that he had on his mind. We have known of several thieving girls who, during their periods of penitence, refunded in some way the things stolen. One high-school girl worked during her vacation to get a sum that she returned as conscience money to some business firms who did not even know that she had stolen from them. She, too, said that the stealing was only a small part of her trouble; she was fighting off her ideas along other lines.

Characteristics of the Continued Cases.—These impulsions may be continued over a number of years. If the individuals are sharp and clever they may never be caught and classified as offenders. And the impulsions may be conquered with the oncoming of adult strength of will, or through new experiences that may enable them to overcome the previous sources of trouble. Those individuals who carry their stealing impulses into adult life, or those

who develop them during later life, belong nearly always to some pathological category, and are fit subjects for treatment by the medicopsychologist. Once more we may say that to get at the background of these cases in older individuals, sometimes it is necessary to give many hours of study over a period of months.

CHAPTER XIII

IMPULSIONS AND OBSESSIONS—CONCLUDED

IN the examples given above, where stealing results from impulsions, the delinquency is not indulged in so much for itself as in expression of a tendency that somehow has been aroused. In many instances, this particular form of misbehavior seems to be vicarious, that is, it appears to take the place of some other delinquency, contemplation of which is in the mental background. The misconduct engaged in figures as of minor importance, but prevents the appearance of some greater form of delinquency. Occasionally the offender explains something of this himself, but generally the transference of impulse is not consciously framed as such. It seems to be much more an affair of subconsciously following a law of mental life, rather than of any conscious attempt at suppressing one of two given evil tendencies. It is not the very rare case that exhibits this background for impulsions; we have already seen scores of individuals in whom the tendency to steal seemed clearly to be the product of a mental mechanism that was thwarting still more undesirable possibilities.

Habit-Formation, Emotions, etc., Back of Impulsions.—But there are several other elements entering into the formation of impulsions and obsessions. The laws and forces of habit formation have their place in renewing and recreating delinquent impulsions. Probably the surprising vigor with which the impulse to steal reappears in the mind of some is due to the setting with which the stealing originally came into experience. It is the old story of the forceful parts of mental life, those that have most to do with impelling action, being originally connected with strong emotional conditions. Think of the first experiences with delinquency, such as many a child has recounted to us. The boy with throbbing heart and dry throat successfully steals. If he has good memory and introspective powers he can tell of the great feeling of relief that safely coming through danger afforded him then. He was afraid he was going to be caught, and he was not; the contrast between his relief and his fear made a deep impression. Now if we follow paths of even simple and non-technical psychological analysis, we may learn from the child that hereafter any perception or suggestion that tends to bring to mind this original situation is likely to develop an impulse toward repetition of the bad conduct. This is impulsion, then, based largely on the forces that habit formation represent. (See our chapter on Habits.) The process develops along several different lines; some of the simplest types of it we may outline.

The Sudden Impulse to Steal—The Basis of It.—Children whose stealings are to be classed as sneak-thieving often may be found to show something of the above mental mechanism. This is worth going into in each case because of the practical value for treatment of discovering just what parts of mental life are involved. Some children steal only because of the perceived opportunity; here comes before them a situation that resembles one with which they have had experience previously. They have not dwelled on the tempting object, nor conceived any desire for it previously; it is simply the perception of something which reminds them that here is a chance. Again comes, perhaps, the quickened pulse and the rush of blood to the head, and the seizure of the thing perhaps not even half wanted or desired. Children who react thus declare often plainly that they are not in the least going about the world looking for things to steal; they may be utterly at a loss to explain why they suddenly give way to this conduct; they will tell you of the aftermath of sinking feeling and fear. There is undoubtedly in these cases sudden renewal of some old mental imagery that spurs to action.

Case of Sudden Impulses.—I remember one boy who has made a fine stand against his stealing impulsions. Worst of all for him to conquer was the temptation to take pennies from unprotected news-stands. During some moments of high emotional excitement with other boys he had been

shown the possibilities of stealing in this way. From that time on he found it difficult to pass a stand where pennies were lying. He never premeditated any such thefts. It never occurred to him until he was there on the spot and saw the money. The few times he gave in he felt deep chagrin afterward, and states that he wanted to go back to replace what he had taken, but was, of course, afraid to do so. (This replacing of goods taken is no unusual phenomenon in children, and the fact goes to illuminate our statement about uncontrolled impulses.) Years afterward this fellow, now a young man, reiterated his earlier statement about his temptations and went over with us again the struggle he had had to overcome them.

Value of Attacking the Specifically Responsible Feature.—Such a specific feature of the background of delinquency as is indicated in the above case must be appreciated and directly met if there is to be any short cut toward checking the stealing impulse. The boy of whom I speak had no one close to him who could directly face the situation, and he had long to work with difficulty alone against a mental force that could have been much weakened had some one taken hold of him in the right way. One has known parents who, when the detailed facts of the case were made known to them, no longer felt satisfied with the time-honored methods of pleading, scolding, or punishment, but attempted on a rational basis to overcome the specific difficulty. If pennies

on news-stands were the hindrance to this boy's salvation, could not this have been overcome if he had had a little stand of his own? To modify the underlying phases of mental life by creating new experiences is the thing.

Constructive Treatment Through Money Allowance, etc.—Sometimes with better training a slight amount of indulgence is warranted. The child who takes small amounts in the home may not do so if he has an allowance or a purse of his own. I have been much struck at times by the amount of trouble and expense a family may go to in making complaint to a juvenile court of a child's stealing little sums at home, while it never occurred to them that half the amount they so expended might prevent the child from thieving for a long period. (At this point we may venture to call attention to what we have said, in our chapter on Age of Moral Development, about the rise of respect for property.) It often seems to me that, in the face of how others in the family carelessly handle and spend money, it is not to be wondered at that the young individual helps himself to what may be found in purses or in more conspicuous places. To start a bank-account and to teach the value of accumulation and rational expenditure is a great preventive. There is much room for a more satisfactory attitude concerning these points on the part of guardians of children.

Pleasurable Excitement from the Impulse to Steal.—In considering this matter of impulsions

I do not wish to minimize the certain elements of pleasure that come through excitement, even the excitement of danger. We know full well that type of boy, and sometimes girl, who enjoys the thrill that even fear affords. This occurs not only in the robust, but also in those whose physical frailties would cause one not to suspect such traits. The impulse developed in this way is in the nature of a response to a challenge: Here is a difficult thing to do, suppose I see if I can do it. But we treat of this in our special chapter on Adventure.

Mental Imagery Causing Impulsions.—The place that mental imagery plays in developing impulsions seems to be very little understood. It is a field that might well be cultivated by psychological research. The idea of stealing and the impulse toward it clearly may arise in the mind as a matter of mental representation, imagery, as the psychologist calls it. The technical phases of that subject we need not even suggest here, and our illustrations of the point may center about the best understood phenomenon, namely, visual imagery, the mental seeing of pictures. From time to time we have been surprised to hear that the child's ideas about stealing come to him in the form of pictures. He sees in his mind's eye something that he has before witnessed, and instantly the impulse to action is set going. From quite unsuspected sources such imagery may arise; a picture may have been seen that really had, or was said to have, special relationship to stealing.

Numerous examples could be given at length showing the manifold possibilities, and also showing the necessity for having a peculiar type of personality involved, or for having the pictures first seen under conditions when they particularly struck in, but the following must suffice. One little boy soon after his coming to this country from an exceedingly simple rural life abroad, saw several pictures in a newspaper, representing the entrance of a thief into a house and his stealing there. It was not long thereafter that this boy himself began entering houses as a sneak-thief. There is no reason to believe he had received instructions in this, and he had led an absolutely honest life before coming to this country. His ignorant parents were at a loss to explain his newly developed tendencies. When we saw him it was no less than a psychological treat to have this simple-minded boy explain to us in his broken English the genesis of his impulsions. It seemed to be the half-lighted entrance to some house, or an open door, which, when he was passing by it, brought instantly to mind the picture of the operations of the thief, a picture that he had marveled at because he had never seen the like of it before. We found that this boy had remarkably good visual reproducing powers, and that in all probability he had told us the exact truth. There was no reason to disbelieve his statements of origin. He gave a very detailed account of the doings of the thief depicted in the paper, and gave us a clear idea

of how the unprotected appearance of a house suggested and started the imagery, the ideas and the impulsion.

Good Pictures Possibly Counteractive.—We have felt that much could be done for specially good visualizers who are afflicted by pernicious imagery by introducing to their attention better interests and beautiful types of pictures. It is quite within the limits of possibility that such pictures as influence others for the good may be of value in these cases. Certainly in the instance of our simple-minded boy, for him to have had presented to his attention, so early in his experience here, those criminalistic newspaper illustrations, could be reckoned as an unfair procedure disastrous in his case, he being an impressionable visualizer. Cases so marked as this are rare, no doubt, but they serve to show some of the paths toward education, or re-education, that may alter delinquent tendencies.

Nature of Obsessions.—At the present point in our discussion we are led to introduce more specifically the subject of obsessions as producers of delinquency. The obsession is to be regarded as the mental idea or imagery that persists as mental content quite apart from the willing of the individual. The phenomenon is of much longer duration than the impulsion. Sometimes it may be considered simply as a prolonged impulsion. In olden times the mental obsession was conceived to be the besieging of the individual by evil spirits—even nowadays children

vexed in this way will say they have something in their minds that they can not get away from. Their thoughts are besieged, as it were, by ideas that they do not consciously desire and perhaps that they struggle to get away from.

Instances of Obsessions About Stealing.—We have known of some of the most curious instances of this kind, even when the individual is otherwise mentally quite normal. One boy had developed, in a way we were never able to learn, obsessive imagery centered about the idea of robbing cash drawers in shops. He managed to succeed in "till-tapping," as the police call it, several times. Even before his success, however, the idea of this form of stealing was constantly with him. He thought about it when he walked along the business streets on his way to school, he dwelled on it at night. We know another boy who, during a casual acquaintance with a young man who proved to be an embezzler, was told about the possibilities of pilfering mail boxes. The lad for long was overwhelmed by this idea and made many attempts at getting booty from public and private mail boxes. As he said to us, he couldn't get the idea out of his head. It was two or three years before he got straightened out on this point. In the meanwhile he lived entirely away from the city, except for a short period at home when his conduct suffered a relapse.

Relation of Desires to Obsessions.—We find that obsessions can not be fairly discussed without

considering the influence thereupon of actual desires. To be concrete we may cite the case of a boy who stated that when a desire took possession of him he thought and thought of it until he found some way to get satisfaction. For instance, if he wanted some particular object he kept his mind on this until he got it. The lad spoke as if all this were done quite voluntarily; as if he had a will that would brook no interference. On analysis the phenomenon, however, seemed more like an obsession, as if the boy's desires were overwhelming, not only in their intensity, but in their power to provoke obsessive imagery and persistent chains of thought. Here, as in the type discussed just previously, it may readily be seen that there is almost no hope for the situation unless a rational shunting-off process is invoked. The ideas are there, the forces are there, and direct opposition from inside accomplishes nothing; new interests that will swerve attention and desires are the therapeutic measures to be sought. The problem involves highly individualized considerations and is only to be solved by careful study of individual peculiarities and needs.

Girl's Impulses to Take Finery.—So far we have said very little about the impulsive stealing of girls that has to do with the taking of objects of dress adornment. The suggestion of the desirability of such personal possessions comes to the girl in many ways—even nowadays in moving pictures where exhibitions of finery are made. In the little

dress rivalries of school life, particularly in high school, in the attention at the party bestowed on the attractively gowned girl, or the one with pretty jewelry, a situation is created that is thoroughly understandable in its possible relationship to impulse. Hence come the borrowings of coats and hats and necklaces; hence arise the almost comical stealings from a comrade of a fancy sweater or a pretty pin. The impulse is, without premeditation, directly aroused by the object. Strange examples, such as we have seen, will no doubt be remembered by many an experienced teacher. The girl who took from the dressing-room the handsome sweater, the color of which she thought much better suited to her than to the owner, and who left it at a friend's house where she went in the mornings to get it to wear to school, has her counterpart in many another such trivial affair. I am not sure that this topic of impulsive stealing of girls in relation to dress and adornment could not best be discussed under the phenomenon of adolescence—we have already mentioned it in the chapter on Companionship. Certainly nearly all girls who have done such things outgrow the tendency, but while it lasts it must be reckoned rightly as stealing based on a rather natural impulse and not having nearly the significance for society that many other forms of stealing have.

Shop Displays Causing Impulse to Steal.—Somewhat more serious, although here again not nearly so important as the stealing by boys, such as

we have mentioned above, is the taking of articles from stores by girls, and sometimes by boys, under the covetous impulse that exhibition of articles of interest to children is bound to create. From the thousands of examples that anybody well conversant with city delinquents could cite, one can only conclude there is nothing very peculiar in this situation, and that such petty delinquency is bound to occur occasionally as long as such opportunities are offered to young folk. The way of prevention is clear. Children should not be allowed to visit these stores unaccompanied, particularly little groups of boys and girls should not be allowed to enter. Even going in for an honest purpose, it is not long before their asides to one another may include suggestion of little stealing. The impulse and suggestion derived from display is as clear a cause of delinquency as anything one could find.

Necessity for Study of Impulsions.—Methods of treatment bearing on the entire subject of impulsions and obsessions call for some discussion, but it is plain that we can not enter into such details as might be desired by professional people who handle cases that verge toward the pathological. However, a number of considerations do clearly concern us here. The length of time necessary for the proper study of the individual case varies greatly, according to the two points we have mentioned in the preceding chapter, namely, age and attitude. There are individual variations at the same ages, of course,

and many differences in attitude. The prime desideratum is complete frankness with a friendly and self-respecting child who desires to better himself. We are quite willing to state that we have seen some cases that for a long time baffled us. Very remarkable was the instance of a little girl who was given to impulsive stealing of the most exaggerated kind and who never gave us her confidence until she had started behaving better. This child directly denied the phases of her experience that we thought might be at the root of her trouble, until a year and a half after our original study of her, when she appeared on the scene and voluntarily desired to tell us of the inception of her tendencies in some early secret experiences. It was apparently only her own desire to be honest with herself that led her to come; there was no urging on the part of any one and we had not seen her for months. Much of the struggle this child's family went through in the endeavor to improve her conduct would have been quite unnecessary had the real facts of the case been discerned earlier. But in the light of our failure, of course we could not blame the parents, who themselves had made many simple inquiries previously and after negative responses had concluded, as many people do, that the child's tendencies were innate, perhaps inherited.

The general method of treatment, as we have all along insisted, is based on getting at the beginnings. The inquiry must proceed along lines that are open

to as much corroboration as possible. This is not so difficult with a child because environmental experiences that can be learned about are often involved. The laws of mental association and the forces of mental habit we have already dwelled on in this connection; they may well form the starting-point for the professional inquirer and open the way to the shortest route of investigation.

Importance of Attitude of Parents Toward Treatment.—Perhaps the main trouble in getting treatment adequately carried out, the treatment that is directly aimed at the sources of the delinquency, is in getting parents and others in control to understand anything of the psychology involved. There are phases of mental life of which they have never even dreamed, and the conservatism of years leads them to be comparatively uneducable in this matter. (We may entirely omit discussion of ignorant parents, who unfortunately are found very often at the head of the delinquent's family, and the parents who wilfully take obstinate points of view, insisting on discipline, and that alone, with which to combat the child's delinquency.) It is not altogether a matter of prior education on the part of parents, for we have found some, naturally sympathetic, who, while deficient in any knowledge of psychology, grasp the points and through their appreciative attitude proceed to follow the suggestions made, or to develop new possibilities as they arise, thereby establishing a cure for the delinquency in question.

Treatment After the Cause Is Discovered.—All the way through, it is not only the first study by your diagnostician, a professional or a lay person, that wins the day, but there is necessary also the meeting of new situations as they arise, and particularly the fitting of environmental conditions to needs of given individuals in ways that the outside observer can not even outline. The original source in experience and perhaps the mental association chains of the delinquent impulse having been discovered, other things have to be dealt with. There is mental habit, for instance; it may be necessary to develop methods of overcoming the bad derived from this. And then there is the necessity for filling the mind with new material, with new compelling interests that may win the day against the old undesirable impulsions. It is useless here to consider the details of this; every case has needs and possibilities that belong to that individual alone.

THE END

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